Commentary

Volume Fifty-One, Number Five, May 1971

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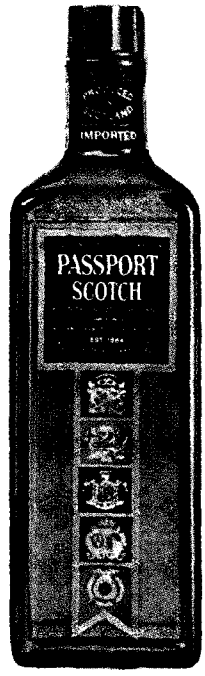

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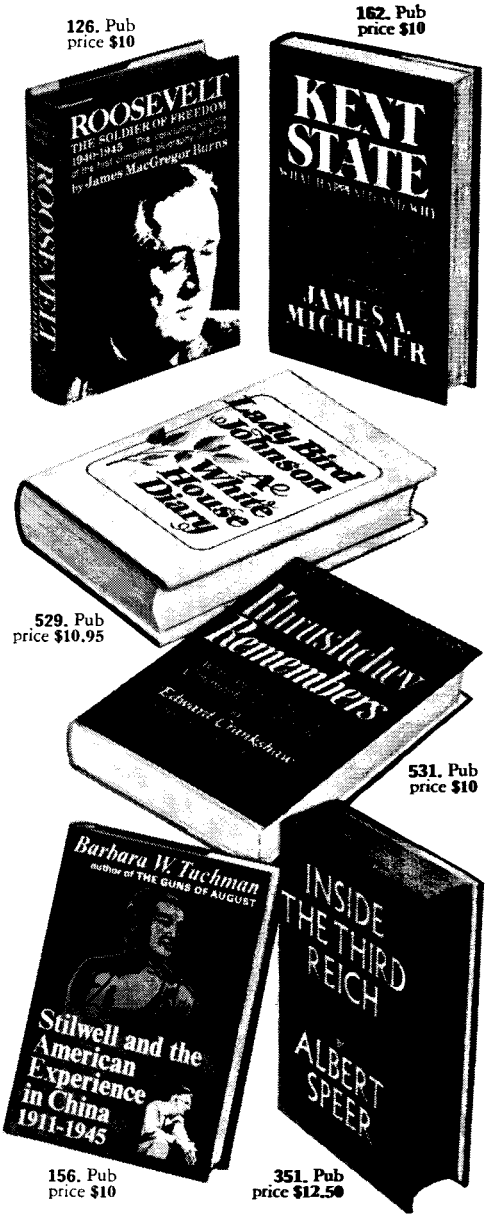

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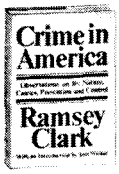

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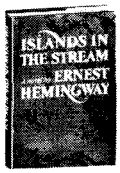

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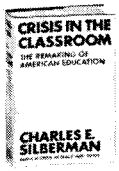

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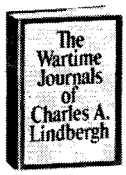

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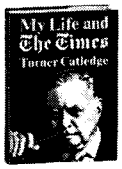

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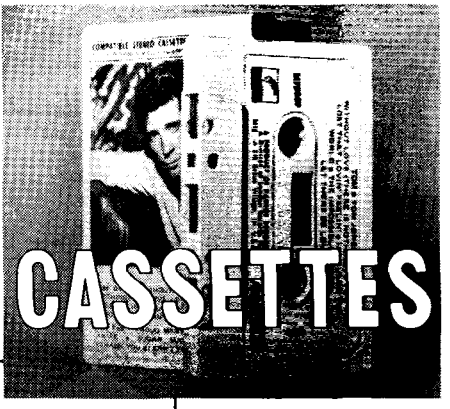

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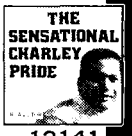

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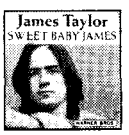

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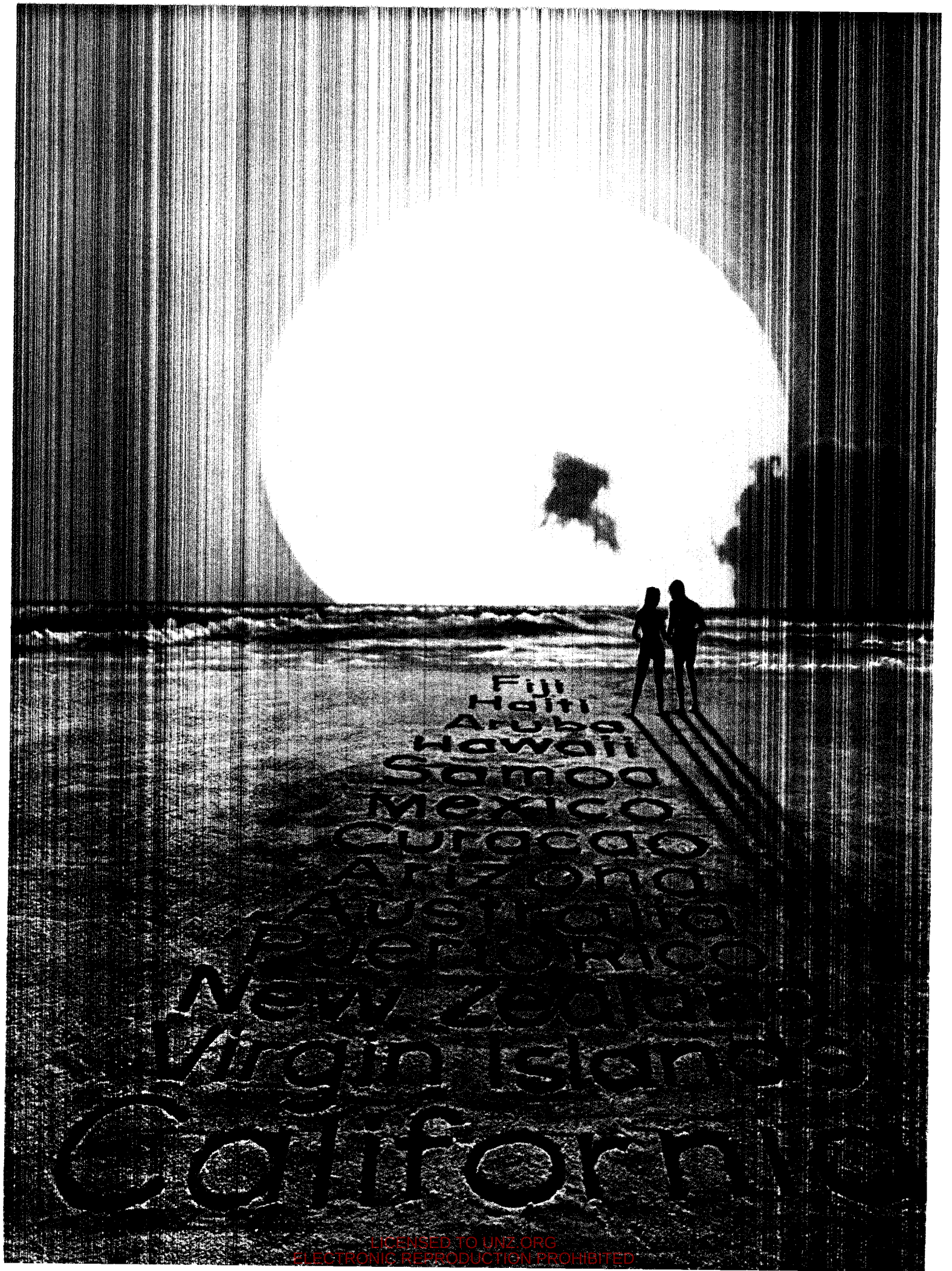

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A Note on Vietnamization

Norman Podhoretz

NATHAN GLAZER (p. 33) tells us that he is embarrassed to add to the millions upon millions of words which have already been written on Vietnam. I too find myself embarrassed, if for slightly different reasons from the ones he gives, to be writing about Vietnam. Like him, I have always refrained out of a certain diffidence toward the experts from writing about Vietnam, although (like him too, I imagine) I have made two or three speeches on the war. The most recent of these speeches, delivered in the fall of 1969, on the day of the great Moratorium, urged, on the basis of arguments very similar to those Mr. Glazer elaborates here, an immediate American withdrawal from what was then still being called the war in Vietnam.

Of course by the time the Moratorium was held, the President had already informed the world that he had decided against an immediate withdrawal and in favor of a gradual disengagement, to be completed presumably by 1972. An immediate withdrawal–so he obviously thought–would guarantee the loss of South Vietnam to the Communists; he was therefore determined to move out in stages and in such a way as to give the South Vietnamese a fighting chance to defend themselves against a Communist takeover after the last American was gone.

This, in rough outline, was the President's stated policy. It was not the policy I would have wanted him to follow, but to me it seemed a plausible enough path for the United States to take in getting itself out of the war. Having opposed the American military intervention in Vietnam from the beginning but never having seen any reason to rejoice over the prospect of a Communist victory, I saw no reason now to oppose a policy of American disengagement which might still prevent a Communist victory from occurring, *provided that policy did not entail continued American military participation in the war, whether on the ground or in the air.*

Many opponents of the war, I suspect, felt much the same as I did about Vietnamization–until the invasion of Cambodia. At that point large numbers of people became convinced that all the talk about disengagement had either been a lie or else that the policy had changed and that the Nixon administration no longer had any intention of getting us out of the war by 1972.

I did not agree with this interpretation of the Cambodian invasion. Cambodia certainly represented a territorial expansion of the war, but it did not in my opinion signify a reversal of the policy of American withdrawal. On the contrary: to me it looked precisely like a tactic in an overall strategy of withdrawal, one of the steps that was being taken to buy the South Vietnamese the additional time the experts thought they would need to develop the capacity to fight the war on their own. The Nixon policy remained what it had always been: a strategy designed not to end the war itself but to bring American participation in the war to an end while hoping that the South Vietnamese would be able to hold out unaided

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(except, of course, for equipment and advice) after the Americans left.

It was difficult to tell whether anyone in Washington really believed that the South Vietnamese could do this successfully or for very long: that is to say, whether they believed that Vietnamization would work. But it was not at all difficult to tell that everyone in power in Washington considered Vietnamization a better risk than a negotiated settlement to end the war. For the only thing there was to negotiate was the degree of Communist participation in the postwar government of the South. Whether or not this would inevitably lead to a Communist takeover of the South—and there were reasons for thinking it would not—both sides always seemed to assume that it would. And since from the American point of view victory always meant the prevention of a Communist takeover of the South, just as the unification of Vietnam under Communism was always the war aim of the Vietcong and the North, the very idea of a negotiated settlement could well be taken as a euphemism for a disguised Communist victory or a covert American defeat. It was this alternative that the policy of Vietnamization had been designed to avoid.

Vietnamization also meant that the American prisoners would be left to the mercy of their North Vietnamese captors, which may explain why that otherwise incomprehensible raid was staged last year on the prisoner-of-war camp at Son Tay. Probably it was a gesture aimed at persuading the American people that we were making every effort to save the prisoners when in fact one inexorable consequence of the policy we were following was to abandon them to their fate. With all due reluctance of course.

BUT if Cambodia was invaded for the purpose of making an American withdrawal possible by 1972 without at the same time making a Communist victory inevitable, what of the "incursion" into Laos? No doubt it was conceived as another step in the same direction. Laos, however, also carried with it the additional purpose of testing the capacity of the South Vietnamese to conduct a difficult military operation on the ground. We will perhaps never know how badly they failed the test; maybe they did better than most of us think; maybe they did not in fact suffer an entirely humiliating rout. But what we do know for sure is that they did not perform brilliantly, not even with massive American air support of several different kinds. Thus, whatever the President may say, the Laotian operation must have undermined the confidence he apparently felt before—else why take the risk of putting it to so dangerous a test?—in the ability of the South Vietnamese army to make Vietnamization work.

If that is the case, what can he be expected to do now? It is quite clear that he will continue to withdraw American forces from Vietnam in large enough numbers to face the electorate in 1972 with an American military presence in the area of only fifty to a hundred thousand troops: he thinks—and rightly—that the country would not stand for anything else. It is also clear that he will not abandon Vietnamization altogether in favor of a negotiated settlement of the war which would set up a coalition government with Communist participation in Saigon: he thinks—and

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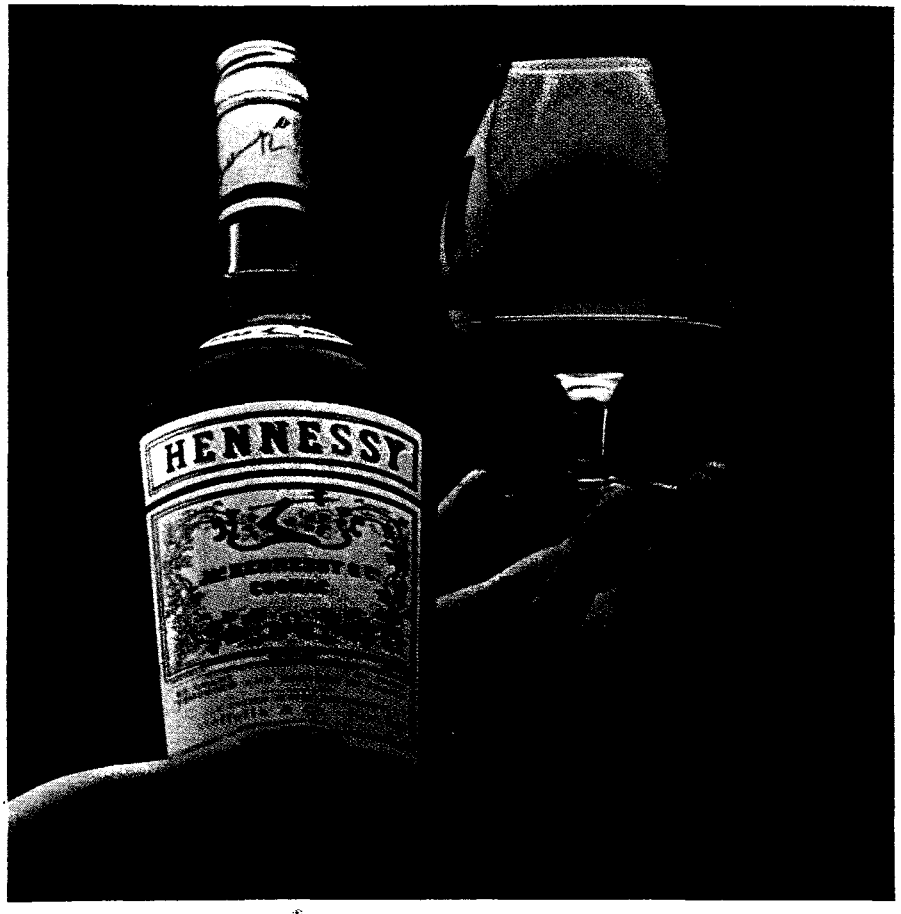

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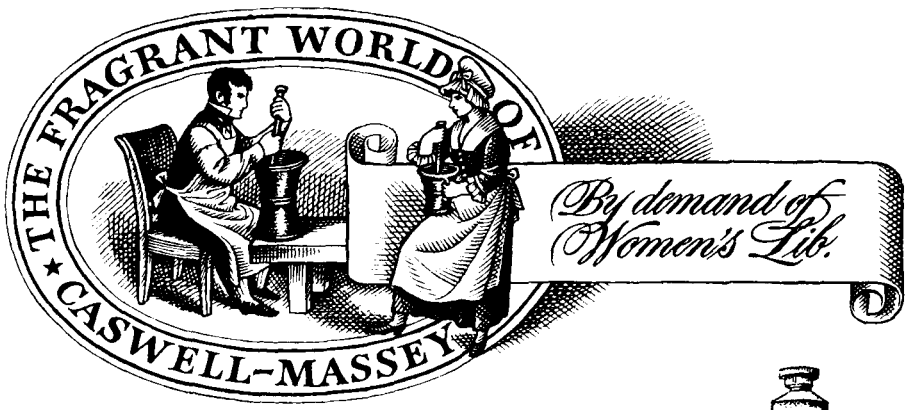
wrongly in my opinion—that the country would not stand for this either.

He is likely therefore to proceed with a policy he will persist in calling Vietnamization but which will in fact amount not to an American withdrawal from the war and a transfer of the responsibility for the defense of their own country to the South Vietnamese themselves, but only an American withdrawal from *combat operations on the ground*. The President has explicitly ruled out the use of nuclear weapons in Indochina. But he has never promised to desist from or even to limit the use of American airpower, of gun-ships and B-52's. Indeed, he has explicitly promised just the opposite. If Vietnamization originally seemed to mean turning the war over to the South Vietnamese to fight as best they could by themselves, it has now apparently come to mean turning only the war on the ground over to the South Vietnamese while we go on bombing South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia at a rate which continues to defy comprehension, so great is it and so disproportionate in its destructiveness to any conceivable objective.

As ONE who has never believed that anything good would ever come for us or for the world from an unambiguous American defeat, I now find myself—and here is the main source of my own embarrassment in writing about Vietnam—unhappily moving to the side of those who would prefer just such an American defeat to a "Vietnamization" of the war which calls for the indefinite and unlimited bombardment by American pilots in American planes of every country in that already devastated region. Vietnamization once appeared to be a plausible alternative to a complete and immediate American withdrawal. Today a complete American withdrawal—from the air as well as the ground—may be the only way of bringing a policy of Vietnamization, as the President himself once seemed to define it, truly and seriously into play.



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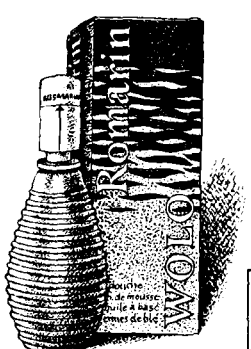

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Letters from Readers

Chicago, Chicago

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Alexander M. Bickel's article on the Chicago trial ["Judging the Chicago Trial," January] suffers from the same faults he attributes to Jason Epstein's book, including pretentiousness, lack of candor, and argument by insinuation and sleight of pen.

First, a relatively small point, but one made large by Mr. Bickel himself. Epstein is correct in saying that Judge Hoffman "ignored" statements by defense counsel (or, if there is grammatical error, it did not originate with Epstein). Example (transcript, October 15, 1969):

> MR. KUNSTLER: Are you turning down my request. . . ?
>
> THE COURT: I not only turn it down, I ignore it.

Second, it is wrong to say that a prosecution violates no legal norms if the case is "plausible." Political and/or racist motives on the part of the prosecution *are* relevant concerns. For example, the Chinese laundrymen in *Yick Wo* v. *Hopkins*, 118 U.S. 356 (1886), were undoubtedly operating laundries in wooden buildings without licenses, thereby maintaining fire hazards and violating a valid city ordinance. What made the prosecutions improper, despite the guilt of the defendants, was the racist motive of the city officials in enforcing the ordinance.

Thus, a prosecutorial motive to "get" the Panthers, or anyone else, is a serious concern. Is there any one of us who could not be "gotten" on *some* "plausible" charge by a determined Department of Justice? Mr. Bickel sees nothing sinister in the fact that Panther headquarters are raided more frequently than Christian Science Reading Rooms—but what of the fact that they are raided with far more frequency, and with far more ferocity, than KKK or Nazi party headquarters?

Finally, Mr. Bickel chides Tom Hayden for prejudging Manson, but proceeds himself to condemn the trial conduct of Kunstler and Weinglass, whose cases are still pending and whose jury trials are yet to be held. Worse still, he has made his judgment without, apparently, having read the transcript (see the first point, above). At any rate, he gives no factual basis for justifying contempt sentences in excess of one year for Weinglass and four years for Kunstler. Having read the record, I can assure you that there is no such basis whatsoever.

MONROE H. FREEDMAN
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Alexander M. Bickel has judged the critics of the Chicago trial and has found them guilty of being apologists for revolutionaries. Mr. Bickel concedes that it is substantially true that the trial "was a mess and a loss for the society as a whole" and "a reckless squandering of the prestige of the legal order," but he says that this loss to society can be easily recouped. He believes that the revolutionaries and their apologists will unmask themselves because "the faith embodied in the First Amendment is not only that in a free society few will want to make a revolution, but that where the revolutionary idea may be freely ventilated, it will defeat itself."

I think that Mr. Bickel has unmasked himself by this stirring conclusion to his article. It seems to me that what the critics of the Chicago trial have been complaining about is precisely the fact that the freedom of our society is being threatened because revolutionary ideas may *not* be freely ventilated, but may be aired only at the risk of defending oneself in court against charges which Mr. Bickel himself concedes were based on "flimsy" evidence, and which "constituted a malfunction of the legal system, perhaps an abuse of prosecutorial discretion." Mr. Bickel further acknowledges that "the federal anti-riot act is an unwise law," that the language of the act is so broad and inclusive as to be perhaps unconstitutionally vague, that the constitutional rights of the defendants were perhaps initially violated in the denial of a permit by the city of Chicago; that the constitutional rights of the defendants were violated long before the Chicago riots by illegal wiretapping; that the Chicago riot may, indeed, have been a police riot, but that in spite of the "mess" that this prosecution represented, the case against the defendants was "plausible" and therefore no last-

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ing harm has been done to society or the legal order.

It is on this point, I believe, that Mr. Bickel is wrong and the critics of the Chicago trial are right. "Plausible" cases can always be created by zealous prosecutors and complaisant grand juries. The cases against Dr. Spock, Dr. Coffin, Angela Davis, the Berrigan brothers, and the Kent State defendants are no doubt plausible by Mr. Bickel's standards, but they nonetheless represent an abuse of the legal process in order to punish unpopular ideas. Academic apologists for such "plausible" cases only encourage further repressive prosecutions.

In such an atmosphere, what happens to Mr. Bickel's free ventilation of revolutionary ideas?

KENNETH G. WEINBERG
Cleveland, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Alexander Bickel too easily dismisses the argument that the Chicago trial was "political" and thus seriously tainted. . . .

A rational definition of a "political trial," I should think, would be a trial that exhibits to a serious degree at least *one* of these extra-legal *intentions* on the part of the regime proceeding to indict and try certain individuals:

1) A desire to strike at *the leadership of the political opposition,* and so demoralize and disperse that group.

2) A desire to win political credit and to build a wider constituency by attacking politically unpopular or notorious ideas.

3) A desire to administer, not justice, but *exemplary punishment* when the *real* target is not the defendant, really, but a larger public; i.e., using a trial as a warning to other persons not to pursue certain political ends.

4) A desire to create, within the trial, a theatrical atmosphere for the purpose of humiliating the defendants, and anathematizing their *political position,* rather than convicting them of real crime.

I think, to any unprejudiced viewer, the Chicago trial exhibited not just one of these defects to a serious degree, but all four (the Attorney General's office is guilty of 1, 2, and 3, while Judge Hoffman seems to have added 4 all by himself).

The indictment was clearly aimed at the "leadership" of the radical Left. That the radical Left is clumsily, and barely, led at all is irrelevant. (Not all political trials are contests between fiendishly clever tyrannies and brilliant subversionists. This trial was a contest between a rather stupid regime and a bunch of second- and third-rate clowns!) After sifting through all the media drivel about the Chicago riots, the administration, in its quaintly obvious way, decided it knew who were the leaders of that desultory "event," and determined to railroad them to jail. If *any* crime was committed in Chicago, it was the crime of malicious mischief, and literally hundreds of people were guilty, including a lot of cops. The commonsense, nonpolitical way of dealing with them would have been sixty days in the county workhouse, not a national TV spectacular involving eight (then seven) characters, whose real "crime" was the knack of getting a lot more publicity than most other "radicals."

Second, the trial was *clearly* aimed at discrediting a political position and winning votes. Much has been written about testimony *disallowed* by Judge Hoffman *upon objection by the prosecution.* More important is what was *allowed,* with prosecution acquiescence, of fatuous, irrelevant, and boneheaded political opinion from witnesses on both sides. A serious prosecution for malicious mischief or disorderly conduct would never have tolerated such irrelevant trash. (Of course, malicious mischief is a county, not a federal, crime. The only reason *this* trial was held was because of the 1967 federal anti-riot law, a nakedly political *law* in itself—but that's another argument.)

Third, the trial was conducted "over the heads" of the defendants, as it were. It was a propaganda blast aimed at a larger public; a warning that said: "Don't Try to Bother the Government Again Or This Is What You Will Get—Or Worse!" (The McCarran Act concentration camps were never *that* far from anyone's mind.) This does *not* mean that the regime was very clever in its tactics. Obviously the Chicago trial had little effect on radical politics. It did *not* dishearten or disarm the radicals (other things did: drugs, mindless bombings, and general self-indulgence—but the administration can take no credit for this).

Finally, Judge Hoffman, independently it seems, decided to make the trial a medieval ordeal, a burning at the stake, figuratively; an act of punishment and degradation itself, rather like the processes of the Inquisition, which attempted to break the spirit of a victim rather than hear a case. His treatment of Bobby Seale is not at issue here—I think Seale puzzled and frightened him. It was his badgering treatment of Kunstler, his contempt for Dellinger (calling him "Dillinger"), his obvious delight in leading the well-established naiveté of Tom Hayden into ever-deeper pitfalls of fatuity. Without being aware of it, I suppose, Judge Hoffman was reenacting the role of the complaisant judges of the Stalin purge trials or of the treason trials under Tiberius.

Ultimately, political trials are based on the self-induced delusion that words are the same as things (which is the heart of *Catch-22*), or even more real than things. The proposition that a mixed bag of misfits (Hoffman and Rubin), dreamers (Hayden), toughs (Seale—no different really from some of the labor toughs of a few years ago), and Unitarian-Quaker do-gooders (Dellinger), who hardly knew each other, who came to Chicago for widely different reasons, and who hardly agree on anything, constitutes a serious threat to *real* law and order is either a vapid delusion or a coldly calculated device of incipient tyranny. The Nixon administration is collectively far too stupid and insecure to institute a really swinging tyranny here, but its *instincts* are tyrannical and its outrageous meddling with the legal system may indeed make it easier for tyranny to come one day.

It is not a sufficient argument against the view that the Chicago trial was political to maintain that *by and large* our legal safeguards are in place, and that due process is observed, generally. *Any* regime can engage in show trials, which *are* political trials, when it feels pressed or when it thinks it sees an opportunity to discredit its opponents. Mr. Bickel's article ignores all this, as it ignores the rudimentary cautions of history. It is *never* safe to permit the regime to engage in political harassment of its enemies *via* the legal system, even if those enemies *are* guilty of some lesser crime. We all know that *crime* is not what bothers the regime in power—opposition bothers the regime. The Chicago trial,

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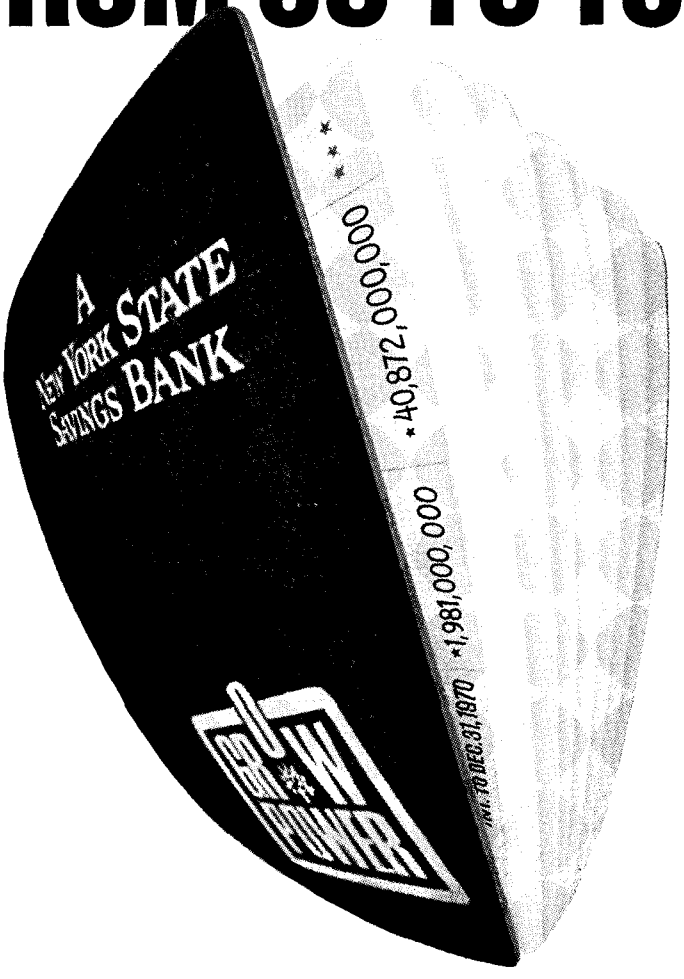

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in its total and ultimate rhetorical effect, was a trial of the opposition for the crime of opposing. *That* makes it a political trial.

DOUGLAS J. STEWART
Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts

ALEXANDER M. BICKEL writes:

I didn't say that Judge Hoffman never himself used the word "ignore." I said that Epstein misuses it in loaded fashion. And I did note that Judge Hoffman sometimes intruded himself personally into the proceedings, and that that was unfortunate. I believe I made clear what I mean by a legally plausible prosecution, and by the sort of political motivation that we accept in prosecutors and indeed invite, and that I consider proper. Mr. Freedman, it seems to me, willfully chooses to misunderstand, while Mr. Weinberg, in whose précis of my article I utterly fail to recognize what I wrote, simply doesn't understand. *Yick Wo* v. *Hopkins* was a case in which a systematic effort was made by authorities in San Francisco to close down laundries run by Chinese aliens. Laundries run by white men, and otherwise indistinguishable, were let alone. I wrote that "the Justice Department's 'political' decision to 'get' the Panthers—if there was such a decision, which the defendants [and Mr. Freedman] surely more surmised than knew—is unexceptionable so long as it was a decision to 'get' the Panthers for conduct that makes them legally liable to arrest and prosecution, *and that has exposed and would expose others to arrest and prosecution*" (italics added). What on God's green earth does *Yick Wo* v. *Hopkins* have to do with that? As for KKK and Nazi party headquarters, they also get raided more frequently than Christian Science Reading Rooms, at times when the rhetoric and actions of their occupants resemble those of the Panthers.

If I prejudged the eventual appellate disposition of the Kunstler and Weinglass contempt sentences, it was by suggesting that quite possibly they won't stand up. Weinglass I hardly mentioned. I did say that Kunstler seemed interested in the verdict of the streets, and that his behavior and that of the defendants in court was not to be condoned. But there is no factual question about what that behavior was. I don't suppose Hayden would have been out of line if he had written that he knew for certain that Manson had done one or another cruel or destructive thing, the facts of which were not in dispute, and that it ought not to be condoned.

Mr. Freedman nit-picks, and I have been doing it with him. Mr. Weinberg is some sort of rapid reader who doesn't take in what is before his eyes.

Mr. Stewart calls the Nixon administration names—an amusement which I myself eschew. But Mr. Stewart also returns seriously to the issue of politically-motivated prosecutions and political trials. Now, suppose there was credible evidence that the leading Democratic Presidential candidate had cheated on his income tax, and the Nixon administration were to prosecute him? One can imagine that it might do so with glee, and with a sincere desire to demoralize the opposition. But would we wish political leaders to be exempt from prosecution for crimes?

The point is that a legally plausible prosecution for an offense that others have been or would be prosecuted for also, regardless of their political positions, may be partly political in motivation. So we can surmise. It is nevertheless lawful. We may think it unwise or otherwise wrongheaded, but that only means that we take a different view of its probable political consequences, or that our political preferences differ from those of the prosecutor. I thought Ramsey Clark's prosecution of Spock, Coffin *et al.* was wrongheaded for both reasons, and I think the Clark-Mitchell (as we must in all fairness call it, since it started under Clark, who did not stop it) Chicago prosecution was unwise chiefly for the first reason, as my political preferences, otherwise different from Mr. Mitchell's, do not incline me toward Hayden, Rubin, Seale *et al.* The law is an instrument of politics, although it often seeks to define the end of politics, and always governs the means. The prosecutorial politics of the Chicago trial were within the law in my judgment. And I don't know where or how Mr. Stewart discovered that "*crime* is not what bothers the regime in power—opposition bothers the regime." Even al-

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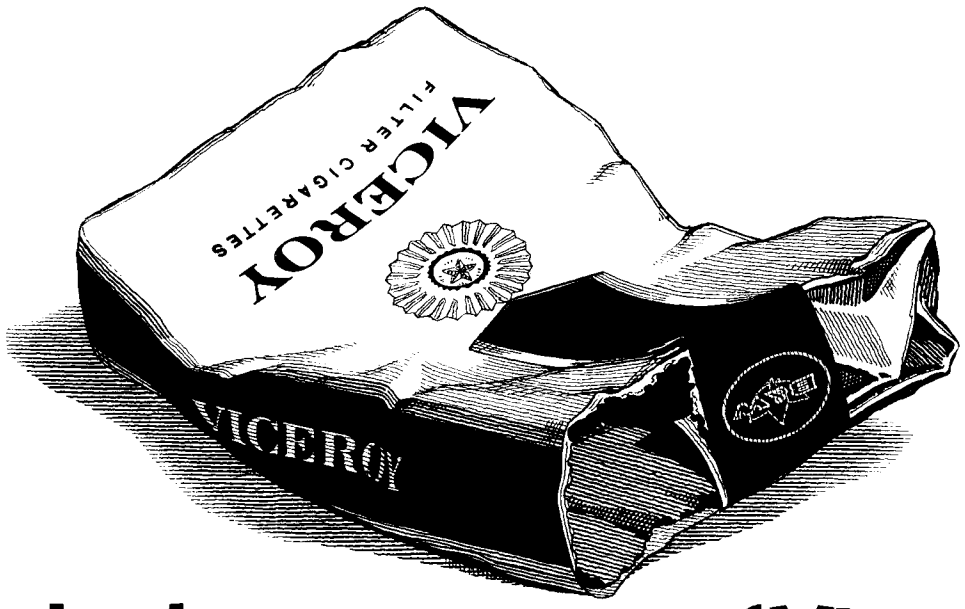

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lowing for name-calling, that seems to me quite gratuitous.

Exemplary punishment of conspicuous offenders, intended to deter others, is at the heart of the administration of the criminal law. Nothing could be more ordinary or more necessary. There was evidence that the defendants engaged in something more than malicious mischief. Inciting to riot is an offense of a different order of magnitude, with which not all of those people on the streets were chargeable. It is in my opinion a particularly grave offense when committed for political purposes in this country at this time. The unfortunate atmosphere at the trial was, in some measure, as I suggested, chargeable to Judge Hoffman, but in the smallest measure. The TV spectacular and all the "bonehead-ed political opinion" were not his doing or the prosecution's. And it does seem to me that, with all his faults and probable errors, Judge Hoffman was more willfully and concertedly humiliated and anathematized than humiliating and anathematizing. I will add only that I really recoil from and utterly reject what seem to me wild analogies to Stalin's purge trials and, for heaven's sake, treason trials under Tiberius.

Film Buffs & Critics

To the Editor of Commentary:

"Historicity"? Could Andrew Sarris ["An Aesthete at the Movies," February] be kidding? No, he could not. Kidding is too subtle for him. Sarris is nothing if not depressingly straight. He is also much narrower and cagier than his rhetoric, in this ostensible review of my two earliest film books, pretends. I think I can reveal this to readers who might be casually deceived by Sarris's genially masked pontificating. Your critic begins by attacking a lecture I gave in the late 40's at Butler Library, Columbia University, as a "humorless diatribe against Hollywood philistinism, then, especially, the deadest of dead horses." When Sarris goes all out, he has no luck.

The ill-grounded terminology is as meaningless as the dateline. Sarris himself has carried that "deadest of dead horses" on his back ever since, and all these years he has been praising it as alive and well, and giving it pet names borrowed from *Cahiers du Cinéma*. Its true identity? Mere Hollywood mediocrity, rampant in petrified postures. My view of it and my lecture (for which Sarris conceived at once a morbid fixation) would remain a basic conundrum to an observer such as he, whether at nineteen or thirty-nine. Sarris could never appreciate my daring, my wit, or my camp. He is allergic to wit, absolutely doesn't dig camp, and like all liberalism-coated philistines, is suspicious of daring. Yet, with the second wind of a hungry animal, he scented something "good" about that lecture (as we shall see) and *wanted it all*. When he saw how I carried off the affair, his reflex anticipated the achievements of LSD. Hence his description of me as "self-possessed and academically chic" becomes a bowdlerized version of the effect I had on him (if you think I exaggerate, go on reading). He was flipped by the possibilities I opened up. But he was also utterly spoiled for writing the "history" he imagines he is constituting word by word.

Sarris's "review" would have it that the premises of that fatal lecture were the basement of "what now is Butler Library" (it was Butler Library *then*): "the cultural catacombs," he absurdly characterizes it, "to which serious discussions of the cinema were consigned in those days." Flapdoodle, fried à la Sarris. My talk was part of an august series mostly on recognized academic subjects by recognized academic lecturers. If I appeared an oddity among them, it was a special distinction, for Meyer Schapiro had been instrumental in inviting me to participate on film. The whole event was considered important enough by Columbia for it to be commemorated in a pamphlet containing the lecturers' own précis of their talks, and I daresay the document still exists.

Sarris's developed masochism (*de rigueur* in a popular teacher these days) drives him to paint himself in that scene as one of the "emotionally immature" listeners bound and gagged by my histrionic magic. With the tactics of a dishonest memoirist, he also paints himself as the only rebel-hero present to beard and taunt me with an unanswered question. Now a totally dfferent side exists to this episode, a side for which Sarris is entirely, arbitrarily responsible but which, with typical possum-playing, he doesn't mention in this review or in his book, *Confessions of a Cultist*. Not at all surprising,

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for he used to borrow my phrase, "the Hollywood hallucination," without always bothering to attribute it to me.

The point is that his account of the Butler Library event does not faintly suggest that, in 1965 and 1966, when he was on critical panels with me at the New York Film Festival, he twice gratuitously —once in a private aside—invoked that haunting lecture of mine as the original push that made him a film critic (something like: "You remember that talk you gave at Columbia: it made me want to become a film critic"). Surely some members of the Festival audience, and one or two panelists, must recall that Sarris made the same plug for me from the platform, during the discussion period with a panel composed of Pauline Kael, Judith Crist, Arthur Knight, Hollis Alpert, Sarris, and myself . . . after I had given *another* lecture seemingly not as fatal as the first Sarris heard.

Your critic gives the impression of having wanted to say something *to* or *about* me all these laborious years of his and now, finally, of having decided on the form it should take: Slander, the Journalist's Friend. A prime example of it is his alleged device for refuting that distant lecture's theme (an attack on the commercial film's grotesque ignorance of artists and its vulgar disrespect for them) by citing Korda's respectful *Rembrandt,* which he says that I denied having seen. Such a denial is unthinkable of me. The film had been made in 1936 and the record of my regard for it is in my *Classics of the Foreign Film.* For the purposes of that book, I had elected to bring out a film's merits and scant its defects. I considered Laughton a gifted actor who behaved well on some film occasions; later, he became the usual decadent hack the movies produce. But being an ornamental and decent Rembrandt, which Laughton was, was far from being a perfect one.

What of Sarris's complaint? Choked up, historically and hysterically, with film-buff sentimentalism and self-righteousness, he points out "Laughton's uncanny incarnation of Rembrandt, an incarnation so memorable that it haunts me whenever I see a Rembrandt self-portrait." On these grounds he proceeds to indict me for irresponsibility to art, artists, and film criticism! My mellow association with art criticism, as

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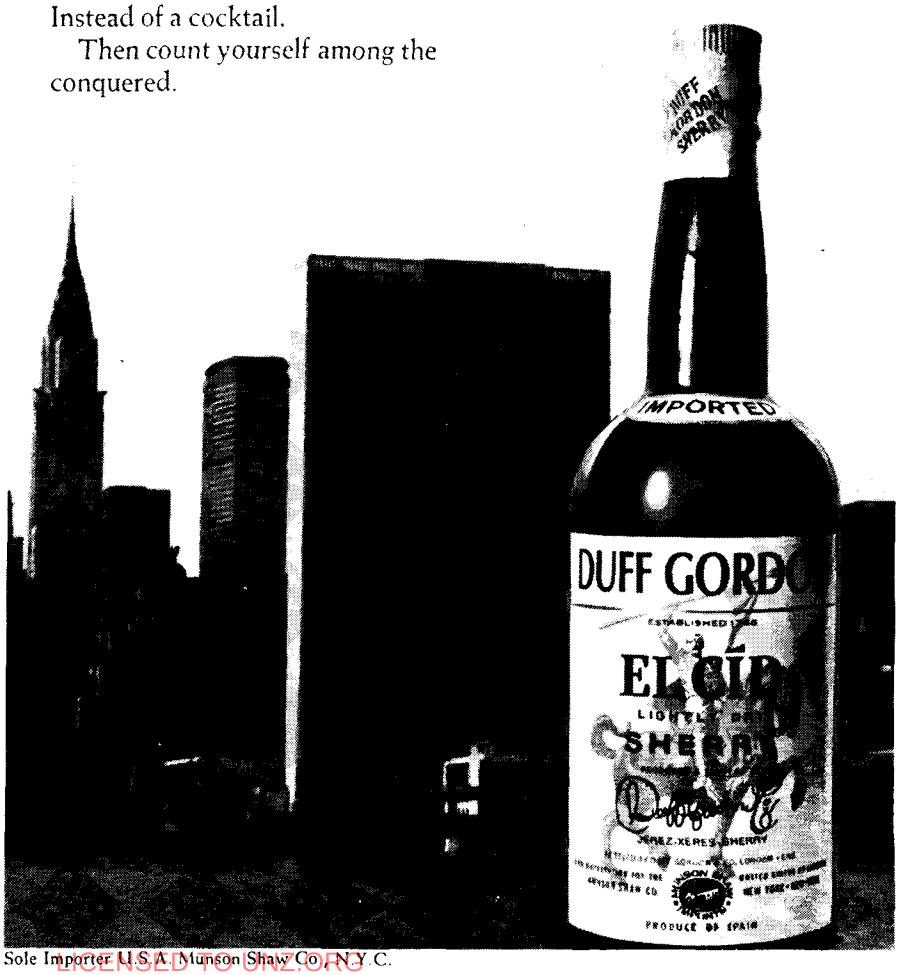

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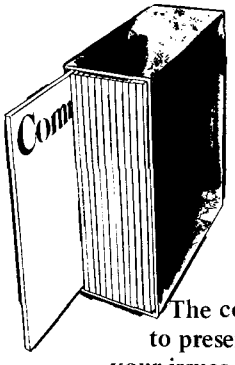

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some of your readers surely know, is no professional secret. I had not the least reason, even then, to be shy of committing myself on the issue Sarris alleges he brought up, for I had been practicing art criticism even before I began practicing film criticism. To Sarris's pretentious tribute to Laughton as Rembrandt I can reply that anyone compulsively reminded of Laughton's impersonation "whenever he sees a Rembrandt self-portrait" has either atrocious taste or eyesight too poor to see *anything* properly. There's no second alternative.

Sarris's transparent strategy (insulting, I think, to readers) is to give a carefully-edited side of the past and present, distorted by his own calculating prejudices. Nobody would know from the Sarris version that the two books of mine he calls into question were endorsed and admired by a roster of prestigious scholars and intellectual critics, all well known to serious readers. One of the art scholars was the late Erwin Panofsky, whose eminence Sarris makes the misstep of slyly using against me; others (enduring in their regard) include Allen Tate, Kenneth Burke, Wallace Fowlie, and Meyer Schapiro. Then Sarris uses the enshrined name of James Agee against me as if nobody recollected or might learn that men such as David Riesman, Eric Bentley, and Richard Schickel have bracketed me *with* Agee. Sarris himself agrees with Schickel that Gore Vidal is indebted to me not just regarding the joke of *Myra Breckinridge*, but also in its deep conspiracy with offbeat sex, because of my earliest writings on Hollywood erotics.

Sarris's boobish tactic is to throw a casual air of history-writing over the core of his personal malice. With perfect blandness he writes that these reprints of mine (1944 and 1947) "have dated badly," by-passing the relevant fact that two men not belonging to his coterie, Eric Bentley and David T. Bazelon, still adhere to their original opinion that *The Hollywood Hallucination*—and for Bentley also its successor—has a resonant, indispensable importance, and that these men still urge their readers to consult it. As to my five *subsequent* film books, Sarris safely corrals them in one equivocally extenuating parenthesis. And why? Because to relate their contents to his categoric dismissal of me here would pull the carpet from under his more grandly generalized judgments such as: "He [Tyler] never sees movies in the process of evolution." It is *Sarris* who will not see *me* in the process of evolution, instead evoking a factitious historical situation in film criticism so as to embarrass me at all costs.

His true motivation becomes clear, astoundingly clear, in his climactic peroration, where I am "exposed" as one who "prefers to pose, from the 40's till now, as the high priest of high art in the temples of the philistines" as well as a Wildean homosexual "expressing his own aesthetic under the guise of educating the reader." These statements are due, first, a big ha-ha. Then Sarris might be reprimanded for utilizing so shameless a totalitarian gambit, worthy of the secret police. Yet that is still not the crux of the matter. This bursts out with his grossest *gaffe* of all: "The fact is that Parker Tyler has never come out in the open on the real-life basis of his bias." To honor this barbarism with a specific answer: How much farther can one come out into the open than by publishing, as I have done over several decades, enough confiding erotic poems to make a book?

Anyway, my forthcoming book of criticism, *Homosexuality in the Movies*, should quite remove all public doubts about "the real-life basis of [my] bias." Sarris should be more than satisfied with it since his careerist's game is to have me get myself so deeply committed *homosexually* that I shall seem to be disqualifying myself *as a film critic*. I am afraid, however, his is the silly, overprofessionalized delusion and wish of a man who imagines film criticism is sexlessly computerized scholarship: an exclusive trade specialty. No! Film criticism, like the arts, is about something. And it's about much, much more, than the professional robots Sarris devotes himself to legitimizing while under "the Hollywood hallucination" that film-buffing makes film criticism.

PARKER TYLER
New York City

ANDREW SARRIS writes:

Parker Tyler's response to my article is to be commended for illuminating the differences in our outlooks. I have never questioned the size or scope of his influence and importance in film criticism. Indeed, much of my critical writ-

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ing has been dedicated to the proposition that there are more things in Hollywood movies than are dreamt of in Parker Tyler's philosophy. That I have more respect for his criticism of subjects with which he is culturally more congenial goes to prove only that conviction yields richer insights than condescension.

The Councilman

To the Editor of Commentary:

Roger Starr's characterization of Councilman Carter Burden ["The Aristocrat in Local Politics," January] as an aristocrat who speaks with an inflammatory tongue is most unfair and unjust.

The proof offered for this assertion is the strident voice in which Mr. Burden speaks out on behalf of community participation in solving the problems that confront it as part of the urban dilemma.

While I occasionally find myself in strong disagreement with Councilman Burden on particular issues, I nevertheless find in him the rare politician whose political actions are governed by what he considers to be the genuine social need and the public good. Councilman Burden as a hard-working, intelligent, and articulate voice for neighborhood government may be attacked by Mr. Starr for taking that position, but it is unfortunate to make Mr. Burden out to be an aristocratic autocrat in order to make a case against him.

Edward A. Morrison
New York County Chairman,
Liberal Party
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . It seems to me that Roger Starr has forgotten the grounds on which our government was formed. He writes: ". . . those with a residual ambition or political power find that emphasizing personal service to the individual or the small group of local people offers a safe haven from the consequences of a bad guess as to how the present American turmoil will end." But isn't it true that the rights and wants of the individual are held in high esteem in our Constitution? It would seem difficult for Mr. Burden not to work for the wishes of his constituents. The small group is the unit of a majority and if we forget this, our type of government will fail. Mr. Starr says that Mr. Burden made supposedly outlandish requests of

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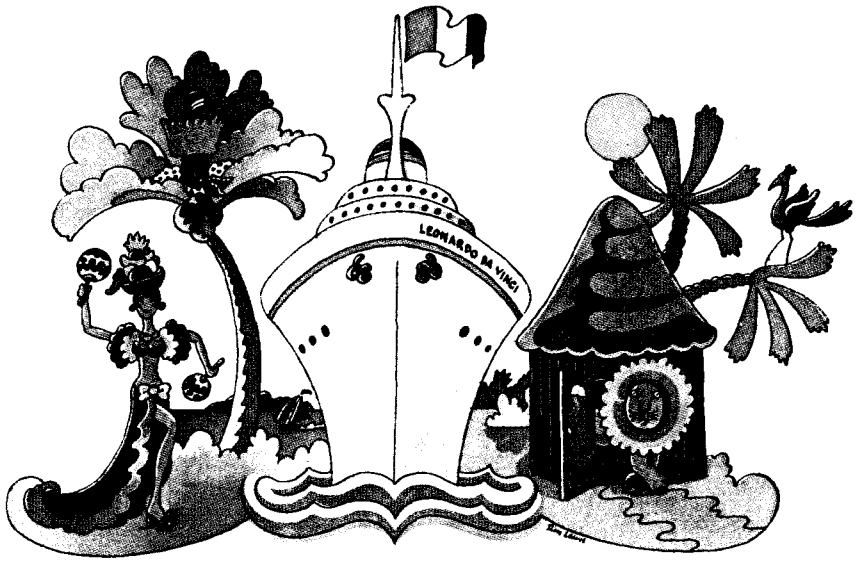

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the city because that was what the people he represented wanted, but it is his job to represent his constituents, not to work for things which, though he may think them right, run contrary to the views of his constituents. . . . It seems to me that Mr. Starr is attacking Carter Burden for being young and wealthy . . . or perhaps Mr. Burden said something against Mr. Starr's own activities and interests which evoked Mr. Starr's condemnation of representative government.

JEFF BIRNBAUM
Scranton, Pennsylvania

ROGER STARR writes:

I did not say that Carter Burden doesn't work hard. He does. He is also personally charming. If he puts in some homework on economics, controls his divisive public tongue, and recognizes the need to prepare his constituents for constant adjustment between the local and the general interest, he may cut quite a significant figure in American politics. As a good Democrat, I trust that gratitude for Mr. Morrison's defense will not hurtle Mr. Burden into the arms of the Liberal party.

Mr. Birnbaum's bed is full of other strange fellows who have argued that an elected representative should restrict himself to furthering the interests of his constituency regardless of his own view of the merits of the case. I do not see how any general government can exist at all unless the representatives of the several constituencies are prepared to compromise in the course of the legislative process. I do not see how any legislator can compromise unless he uses his own judgment and relies on his own system of values. And I don't see how he can survive the compromise unless he has let his constituents in on the secret that there is a price—sometimes a very high price—on the bounties he has offered them.

Anthologizing

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The "strange little production" which David Bromwich does not deign to mention by name in his review of another anthology, *The Voice That Is Great Within Us,* edited by Hayden Carruth [Books in Review, February], is, I presume, *Quest for Reality: An Anthology of Short Poems in English,* selected by Yvor Winters and Kenneth Fields (Chicago, Swallow Press, 1969).

Mr. Bromwich says, "Specific choices had been authorized by the late Yvor Winters. . . . Donne appeared in a minor role compared to Winters himself."

As the surviving editor specifically points out in his introduction, "Winters did not see fit to include his own poems because he had grown to dislike this common editorial practice." The twelve that are included were selected by Mr. Fields—after Winters's death—as he clearly states.

Professor Winters was not a modest man, and may well have valued his own poems more highly than those of Donne. However, in attributing this particular proportional selection to him, Mr. Bromwich is in error.

TURNER CASSITY
Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia.

DAVID BROMWICH writes:

I did not have the Winters book at hand when I wrote the review, and so could not check on the statement of editorial policy to which Turner Cassity refers. I accept the correction, of course, though it is rather weakened by the admission that Winters was never bound to underestimate his own work. Perhaps we may assume that in this case Winters's point of view was taken over a bit too faithfully by his disciple. The exact proportion turns out to be three pages of Donne against fifteen of Winters; but that is hardly the only slip of its kind. The entire latter part of *Quest for Reality* is unfairly (and unrealistically) dominated by friends and relations of the eminent critic.

Relevance & Sin

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I learned much from reading Gershom Scholem's "The Holiness of Sin" [January]. . . . Although I had previously been aware of some of the desperate aspects of the Kabbalah movement in the medieval period, I knew nothing of the mystical *kelipot* and the belief that filling the *kelipot* to bursting with great evil would cause a holier, redeemed world to appear. Also, . . . I had long appreciated Cecil Roth's treatment of the Marranos, but it had never occurred to me that continued exile and enforced apostasy would eventual-

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Jewish Calendar
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September
20 Monday First Day Rosh Hashanah
21 Tuesday Second Day Rosh Hashanah
22 Wednesday Fast of Gedaliah
29 Wednesday Yom Kippur

Arbutus

October
4 Monday First Day Sukkot
5 Tuesday Second Day Sukkot
10 Sunday Hoshana Rabbah
11 Monday Shemini Atzeret
12 Tuesday Simhat Torah
19 Tuesday New Moon Heshvan 1st day
20 Wednesday New Moon Heshvan 2nd day

Pomegranate

November
18 Thursday New Moon Kislev 1st day
19 Friday New Moon Kislev 2nd day

Olive

December
13 Monday First Day Hanukkah
18 Saturday New Moon Tevet 1st day
19 Sunday New Moon Tevet 2nd day
28 Tuesday Fast of Tevet

Fig

1972
January
17 Monday New Moon Shevat
31 Monday New Year for Trees

Citron

February
15 Tuesday New Moon Adar, 1st day
16 Wednesday New Moon Adar, 2nd day
28 Monday Fast of Esther
29 Tuesday Purim

Date Palm

March
1 Wednesday Shushan Purim
16 Thursday New Moon Nisan
30 Thursday First Day Passover
31 Friday Second Day Passover

Orange

April
5 Wednesday Seventh Day Passover
6 Thursday Eighth Day Passover
14 Friday New Moon Iyar, 1st day
15 Saturday New Moon Iyar, 2nd day
19 Wednesday Israel Independence Day

Carob

May
2 Tuesday Lag Ba'Omer
14 Sunday New Moon Sivan
16 Friday First Day Shavuot
17 Saturday Second Day Shavuot

Myrtle

June
12 Monday New Moon Tammuz 1st day
13 Tuesday New Moon Tammuz 2nd day
29 Thursday Fast of Tammuz

Adam's Apple (Forbidden Fruit)

July
12 Wednesday New Moon Av
20 Thursday Fast of Av

Bay

August
10 Thursday New Moon Elul, 1st day
11 Friday New Moon Elul, 2nd day

Hazel

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ly cause a significant minority of the Marranos to feel that evil had been divinely ordained . . . and that therefore they should commit as much evil as they possibly could.

All this offers a new perspective on . . . a significant minority of present-day youth. *Their* apostasy lies in fighting what appears to be an immoral war, or, more to the point, in participating in what to them seems a corrupt and hypocritical society. . . . I do not mean to imply that anybody is trying to fill *kelipot* or that our youth even know or believe in such a theory, but they often act and behave as if they do. . . . Although I do not approve, I now understand, and for the first time, the conviction held by some of our youth that it is their moral duty to behave in the most abominable way conceivable.

Apparently they feel they must make things get so bad that we shall have no choice but to rebuild. Nor is this feeling restricted to youth. Professor Scholem's wisdom has focused my attention on some members of the older generation I have witnessed at political gatherings repeatedly contending that to build you must first tear down, and urging mindless destruction and disorder. . . .

It is obvious that "messiahs" will appear by the score in times of turmoil, but it was never clear to me until I read "The Holiness of Sin" why so many in our day want to appear as evil incarnate, or at least do not hold themselves accountable for their moral behavior. . . . Thank you for my new understanding of our times. . . .

H. Melvin Lieberstein
Wichita State University
Wichita, Kansas

Judaism & Politics

To the Editor of Commentary:

Hillel Halkin's review of *The Wineskin and the Wizard* and *Zionism Reconsidered* [Books in Review, January] was compounded of a joyously vicious and propagandistic mixture of distortion, innuendo, half-truth, and plain name-calling which placed it securely in the tradition of Jewish reaction that many of us now associate with Commentary magazine. As such, it was a matter of neither surprise nor dismay.

I am not going to comment on all the points that Mr. Halkin made—or rather scored—but one is central to his entire argument and is so utterly fallacious that I must attempt to set the record straight. "What was new about Zionism," Mr. Halkin declares, "was not its interest in power—Jews have always had an interest in power, like human beings everywhere—but rather its aim of attaining it through the agency of a Jewish state." So bald and uninformed—and indicative of so profound a misunderstanding of the nature of Judaism—is this remark that one boggles at the fact that a purportedly serious Jewish magazine could permit it within its columns. Contrary to what Mr. Halkin assumes, the question of power has always been of central but controversial importance in Jewish thought, the higher elements of which have always insisted on the necessity of its renunciation by Jews.

"From Moses to Moses there was none like Moses," and I trust that I will be allowed by Mr. Halkin to base what I have said on Maimonides's own writings without once again being accused of abysmal ignorance of things Jewish. The aim of the Torah and hence of Judaism, Maimonides tells us, is twofold. On the one hand, it seeks to inculcate in its adherents the "well-being of the soul," or the spiritual perfection of individual men. On the other hand, the Torah seeks to bring about the "well-being of the body" which, as he says, is "established by a proper management of the relations in which we live with one another."

Two answers, reflecting the polar extremes of an antinomy which pervades the entire course of Jewish history, *and which most significantly describes that history,* have been given to the question of what is meant by "a proper management of the relations in which we live with one another." On the one hand, there are those who view the Messianic era as the reinstitution of the ancient biblical polity, following which (and as a result of) a divine intervention of a miraculous nature, an era of universal peace or, in other recensions, of Israel's hegemony, will be inaugurated. In this view, human endeavor in the political realm is required to bring the first phase of the Messianic era into being, and there is therefore no objection to political action so long as it is consonant with this goal. The ethos here is one which a Reconstructionist friend of mine advocates in terms of "Might and Power in accordance with My spirit."

The inversion, of course, is beautifully absurd. No doubt, Mr. Halkin is unfamiliar with the words, so let me repeat them as they appear in the Bible: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts" (i.e., the most powerful Lord). The other view, then, holds that the Messianic age will be a profoundly non-political one and that it can only be brought into being by human endeavor—in Samuel Hirsch's words, "The Messiah cannot come before we have become completely good."

Maimonides describes two ways to the attainment of the "well-being of the body," namely, "the removal of all violence from our midst" and the "teaching to every one of us such good morals as must produce a good social state." In the concluding verse of *H. Melakhim* he describes the Messianic era in comparable terms. There will be, he says, "neither famine nor war, neither jealousy nor strife. . . . The one preoccupation of the whole world will be to know the Lord." Maimonides insists that the Messianic age will not be accompanied by miraculous interventions and will not transform nature.

The Messianic era, then, is marked by the absence of evil (in the sense of violence and contention, in particular) and by a universal preoccupation with the quest for truth. In Maimonides's view, politics is evil and is wholly incompatible with the quest for truth.

Commenting on Shemaiah's exhortation, "Loathe mastery and do not familiarize yourself with the powers that be," Maimonides's remarks center round his quotation of the Talmudic dictum, "When a man is appointed leader of a community below, he becomes wicked toward heaven," and makes it clear that not only rulers but also lesser political actors are subject, inescapably, to the corrupting effects of power. Even more interesting is Maimonides's comment

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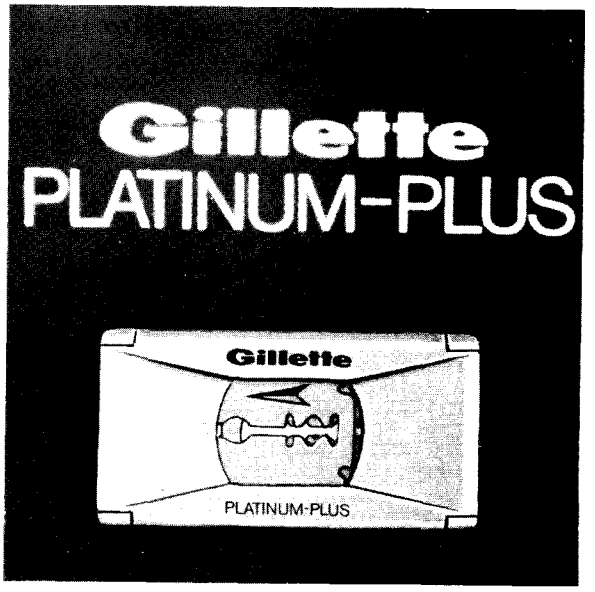

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on Nechunya bar HaKanah's "Whoever takes upon himself the yoke of the Torah they remove from him the yoke of the kingdom and the yoke of worldly occupation. However, whoever casts off the yoke of the Torah, they place on him the yoke of the kingdom and of worldly occupation":

> The yoke of the Torah means the constancy of study. The yoke of the kingdom means the burden of the king and his armies. The yoke of worldly occupation means the burden of fortune. He said that in recompense for his assuming the yoke of the Torah, the Lord, may He be blessed, will deliver him from and relieve him of the burden of fortune. His statement, "casts off the yoke of the Torah," refers to one who has said, "the Torah was not divinely revealed and I will not bear it." [The ancient sages] said, "*Haruth*—engraved" upon the tablets means "*Heruth*—freedom"; meaning to say, freedom from the consequences of fortune and from the affairs of kings is granted to one who accepts and practices what is written on the tablets.

. . . Two points of fundamental importance for an understanding of Judaism must surely emerge from this all-too-cursory survey. The first is that the goal of attaining the well-being of the body is one of the two goals toward which Judaism directs its adherents; the second is that there are two different notions as to what this goal is and therefore as to how it is to be achieved. On the one hand, there is a "political" view of the Messianic future, according to which political behavior in the present is considered acceptable if it brings that future any closer to attainment. This parallels the general idealist view of politics, a view which had led to such wondrous rationalizations of our evil impulses as the notion that it is possible to fight a "war to end all wars," or that the upbuilding of a bureaucratic state is the way in which to make the state wither away. On the other hand, there is the view which antithesizes the Messianic and the political conditions, which declares that all power necessarily corrupts, and that the pursuit of Torah and the pursuit of power are mutually incompatible. Political action can therefore never bring the Messianic era into being, for it is the very absence of politics (evil and falsehood) that describes the Messianic era (love and truth).

Both points of view are amply present in the Jewish tradition; for every "loathe mastery and do not familiarize yourself with the powers that be" there is a "the king's servant is king; cleave to the heat and it will warm you." The dimension of Jewish holiness and profanity, of Jewish distinctiveness (which is implied in the Hebrew *kadosh* which we translate as "holy") and "normalcy," is to be drawn precisely between these two polarities: "Normalcy" is what describes the non-Messianic era, hence profanity, hence power; distinctiveness is that which describes the Messianic era, hence holiness, hence powerlessness.

So dismally does Mr. Halkin misunderstand the nature of Judaism, and of Jewish history, that he considers it relevant to ask whether "Jews are somehow above the ordinary range of human business and concerns." He and so much else in contemporary Judaism are eloquent testimony to the fact that they are not. The point is not whether Jews are, *but whether they should be*. For Zionists, and indeed for others throughout the course of Jewish history, normalcy is a desirable goal, and the "ways of the nations" an acceptable arbiter of behavior. Of such people, who deny the Messianic possibility by defining the Messianic era in "normal" terms, we can say, with Shimon ben Yohai in his comment on Isaiah 43:12: "If you are 'My witnesses' I am the Lord; and if you are not 'My witnesses,' I am not, as it were, the Lord." For others, not the standards of a viciously evil world, but those of the Messianic kingdom, are the arbiter of action: "We define a good action," Steven Schwarzschild has written, "by asking whether it will be imperative both for the hastening of the Kingdom in time and within the Kingdom once it is established."

MICHAEL SELZER
New York City

HILLEL HALKIN writes:

Michael Selzer prefers not to comment on the points that I made —or rather scored—in discussing his book. I will accept this as the plea of *nolo contendere* that I assume it was meant to be.

I am not sure why Mr. Selzer has chosen to quote so extensively from Maimonides—who, incidentally, was so convinced that "when a man is appointed leader of a community below, he becomes wicked toward heaven" that he spent the last decades of his life as the recognized leader of the Jewish community of Cairo—unless it be that because a number of Maimonides's writings have been translated into English, he is one of the few authoritative spokesmen of the Jewish tradition whom Mr. Selzer is able to read. (Would it be wide of the mark to guess that the reason Mr. Selzer never footnotes his sources, neither in his present letter nor in *The Wineskin and the Wizard*, is that such a minimal concession to scholarship would require him to reveal that he is entirely dependent for his knowledge of Jewish history on secondary studies and English translations?) In any case, whereas Maimonides is concerned in these passages with the Messianic era, I had thought that Mr. Selzer and I were more interested in our own. In point of fact, I know of no Zionist leader or author of note, with the exception of the mystical Rabbi Kook, who ever suggested that Zionism was in part or in whole a fulfillment of Messianic prophecy. Zionism arose and has essentially continued to this day as a national movement of finite if ambitious political, cultural, and social goals and not as an intended inducement of the millennium. To find it equated with the latter, one has to range further afield: to the writings of Christian chiliasts, and occasionally, of anti-Zionist Jews.

Finally, Mr. Selzer wishes to assure the readers of COMMENTARY that he does not think that Jews *are* above ordinary human concerns but merely that they should be. I have reread my review and do not find that I in any way misrepresented him on this point.

Meeting Jews

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"Land Without Jews" by Herbert Gold [January] was written with admirable sensitivity. Mr. Gold had the rather rare opportunity to meet Jews in a situation where they were living their religion and/or heritage entirely from within. The sudden encounter with such a co-religionist is perhaps the best manner for most of us to appreciate the spirit of *chevra* (fellowship) in Jewish life. . . .

ROBERT A. GOLDSTEIN
Rochester, New York

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Law Enforcement, Crime & Public Policy

To the Editor of Commentary:

James Q. Wilson ["Crime & the Liberal Audience," January] chides the liberals for having allowed the political Center and Right to preempt the battle against crime. . . .

Mr. Wilson may have a political point, but whether he has a real one may depend on whether taking a firm position on crime is a promise that can be kept; that is, whether anybody knows a way of reducing crime substantially in the not-too-distant future. In his comments Mr. Wilson does not much occupy himself with that question; of the around 1,000 lines of his article, he devotes 979 to explaining why the liberals did not but should have become crime fighters, but only 21 lines to a discussion of what form the fight should take, and even there he is surprisingly general. The only specific recommendations are in the drug field: "extend the use of chemical alternatives to heroin addiction" and (I have reversed his order to keep the joke for the end) undertake "a massive effort to cut off the flow of heroin into this country."

Cutting off heroin indeed! Messrs. Anslinger and Hoover have been doing it for a long time, and all they seem to have accomplished is to keep the price sufficiently high to maintain the awesome secondary predatory crime wave of the addicts. I find Ramsey Clark more convincing when he warns in his book, *Crime in America,* which Mr. Wilson also reviewed in Commentary [Books in Review, March] that organized crime will always supply "goods and services wanted by a large number of people," and asks us to see the heroin menace in perspective. First, because today it is a smaller problem than it was in 1900, when one out of every 400 Americans was an opiate addict, and second, because he sees the real danger in the whole future wave of synthetic drugs, the stimulants and depressants—generally the artificial mood creators—that might increasingly endear themselves to the nation.

Mr. Wilson also advocates "improvement" of "the police," an institution he has carefully studied. It is, of course, a tempting thought that if we could only catch more criminals, and let word get around of our success, we would drive them out of business altogether. The truth is that we probably catch as many or as few as any law enforcement system anywhere in a big crawling city. Probably we could catch a few more, but not many more, unless we are prepared to enlarge our police forces very drastically.

Mr. Wilson spares his ultimate wrath for delays in the criminal courts. He encourages us to attend to them with an "outrage that can be aroused by rats in a tenement." As to the many shortcomings of our criminal courts, there can be no doubt. They are overcrowded, delaying, often undignified. All this should be changed for its own sake, but not primarily because it will substantially reduce our crime rate, because it will not. Mr. Wilson is, of course, also for improving our prisons. But to change them from hell-holes into institutions of learning and work and rehabilitation requires first of all some of that liberal compassion of which Mr. Wilson does not think much. Eugene Debs wrote: "While there is a criminal element, I am of it, and while there is a soul in prison, I am not free." Such compassion has nothing to do with sympathy for crime but it is an indispensable precondition for its cure.

But the real giveaway of Mr. Wilson's shallow view of the problem is his linking "predatory crime and campus disorder," a juxtaposition of which the political Center and Right are so fond. Most of us deeply regret efforts to force the universities to become a political-action arena, but to suggest that these efforts of our long-haired, blue-jeaned youngsters are part of the crime problem is exactly the dangerous nonsense that Ramsey Clark tries to lead us away from. Our crime rate was six times as high as that of any other Western country long before our young people rose, and they have not made it worse. The truth is that the roots of our high crime rate are deep in our past and to lay bare their dismal strength and to be skeptical about any short-range cure may not be smart politics, but it is the type of wisdom that makes for the statesmanship we so urgently need.

That law enforcement can control crime of our magnitude is at best a bureaucratic illusion, at worst a shabby political slogan. To be sure, law enforcement could do some very obvious things. It could do something about the 24 million handguns in the homes of ordinary citizens, 40 for every 100 families. Milton Eisenhower's Commission *proved* that more handguns mean more homicide. Law enforcement could withdraw from at least some of the non-victim crimes now on our books, and thereby free manpower for more important tasks and also remove a permanent threat to the integrity of the system. But Mr. Wilson is not that specific. As a matter of fact, he is so unspecific that one wonders whether his exhortation to the liberals to man the barricades deserves to be distinguished from those one hears from the most thoughtless of the crime-fighters on the Right.

Law enforcement can do not much more for crime than hospitals can do for cancer. Ramsey Clark has again the better part of wisdom when he writes: "As with all crime, it is late in the day when law enforcement must step in to protect society." Policies that aim at crime must reach deeper than "cutting off heroin." The liberals are perhaps more decent in not joining the hue and cry, but evolving policies instead, for which Ramsey Clark's essay, together with Francis Allen's *The Borderland of Criminal Justice,* Norval Morris's *The Honest Politician's Guide to Crime Control,* and Herbert Packer's *The Limits of the Criminal Sanction,* are a thoughtful preparation.

Hans Zeisel
University of Chicago
Law School
Chicago, Illinois

To the Editor of Commentary:

Bravo to James Q. Wilson for his discerning and perceptive article. I assume he zeroed in on liberals because he considers himself a liberal, but certainly his strictures contain food for thought for conservatives as well, since both liberals and conservatives have failed to address the real problems. . . .

What most liberals and conservatives have failed to realize is that our criminal justice system is not a system. As the Eisenhower Commission and FBI reports have shown, suspects are arrested in only 12 per cent of the nation's serious crimes, only 6 per cent are convicted, and only 1½ per cent

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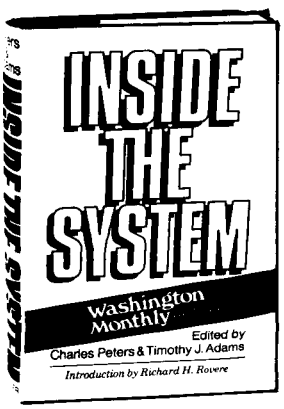

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are imprisoned for these crimes. Based on these figures, it would be hard to say that "crime does not pay." The present criminal justice system does not deter, does not detect, does not convict, does not correct, and will not improve without substantial public understanding and activity.

It is for this reason that fifty-four national and regional organizations have combined to form the National Alliance on Shaping Safer Cities, in order to take the crime issue away from both the ultra-Right that calls for repression and the ultra-Left that calls for violent confrontation. . . .

The Alliance believes that we need an informed citizenry demanding change based not on emotion or preordained ideologies, but rather on knowledge. In that way, it feels, the many recommendations of experts, results of research, and successes of pilot projects, can be introduced into the total system of criminal justice. The Alliance plans to do this by involving citizens at all levels in determining how the streets are to be policed and how justice is to be meted out in humane, constructive ways. One of the important things we want to do is help destroy myths and stereotypes about crime.

For example, who are the worst victims of violent crime? Blacks, not whites. In the seven FBI Index crimes—forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny ($50 and over), auto theft, and willful homicide—the *only* crime in which whites are victims more often than blacks is larceny. That is why so many black, Mexican-American, and Puerto Rican groups are even more exercised about violent crimes than are white groups.

Another instance. The first jail census taken by the Justice Department's Law Enforcement Assistance Administration revealed that 52 per cent of the 426,000 inmates in jails across the nation have not been convicted of any crime. Of these, four out of five are eligible for bail but cannot raise the cash. Because courts have tremendous backlogs, defendants may linger in overcrowded cells for months or even years. . . .

When we do arrest people and send them to jail, we seem, with rules and regulations, to be trying to insure that they return. Everybody knows that the purpose of a prison is to reform prisoners through vocational training—right? At our national consultation on Shaping Safer Cities, Melvin Rivers of the Fortune Society told us that when he was sent to prison in New York, he was trained as a barber. When he got out, he tried to get a barber's job. He found he needed a license, so he applied for one—and discovered he couldn't get a license because he had been in prison! There are at least forty codes, laws, and regulations in the state of New York which similarly serve to keep ex-cons from going straight. Nor is New York unique among the states.

Prisons are so bad that recidivism is the rule rather than the exception. Some 40 per cent of all released inmates (75 per cent in some areas) are reimprisoned within five years, often graduating to worse crimes. Only 2 per cent of all inmates are exposed to any innovative treatment.

But I must part company from Mr. Wilson when he suggests that removing public intoxication and drug abuse from the criminal justice system would not improve it. Arrests for public drunkenness account for one-third of all arrests in the nation. . . . Banning vice drives up its price, creates a rich market for underworld operators, and makes it necessary—in the case of drugs—for addicts to finance their habits by stealing, to the tune of $50,000 to $100,000 a year for each addict. And, as many police chiefs and judges have pointed out, systematic bribes from pushers, pimps, and bookies are probably the most important source of police corruption.

The Alliance urges that non-victim crimes be transferred from the criminal justice system to more appropriate social-welfare and health systems—detoxification centers for alcoholics, drug treatment clinics and hospitals for drug addicts, for example—so that police, courts, and prisons will no longer be flooded with irrelevant social problems and will be able to use their too-limited resources in coping with violent crime. . . .

HARRY FLEISCHMAN
National Alliance on Shaping
Safer Cities
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

James Q. Wilson rightly scourges the "Liberal Audience" for ignoring or belittling the crime problem. That liberal politicians, however, particularly candidates, deserve the same punishment is not evident. Several years ago Mr. Wilson rhetorically asked: ". . . What can be done about the increase in crime, short of locking up everyone under thirty years of age?" And answered: "On present evidence, the social scientist's answer would have to be: not much" (the *Public Interest*, Fall 1966). Mr. Wilson now would give priority to "improving the criminal justice system as a mechanism for just and effective social control," and would emphasize the criminal courts and the correctional system. I concur, but I fear the answer to Mr. Wilson's old question is still "not much." What might be done in these areas is by and large quite costly, of presently untested efficacy, and unlikely to have a visible short-term impact. Liberal candidates may have been resisting the temptation to promise much when they knew they could deliver little. Given the characteristic self-indulgence of left-liberal politicians in this regard, perhaps Mr. Wilson owes them special praise rather than blame.

Probably the single most promising source of quick relief to the ravages of violent street crime lies in Mr. Wilson's (and others') recommendation to "extend the use of chemical alternatives to heroin addiction," e.g., methadone. It is hard enough to imagine this as an electioneering slogan at all, much less as one that would appeal to the Right, the Center, or to anyone else whose votes are being chased by liberal candidates. The "Liberal Audience" may have to assist in educating other audiences even to make such esoteric political discourse possible; and, as Mr. Wilson suggests, these educators certainly need some lessons first.

EUGENE BARDACH
University of California
Berkeley, California

JAMES Q. WILSON writes:

I wish people who disagreed with me, especially scholars as distinguished as Hans Zeisel, would argue over what I did say instead of what I did not. Mr. Zeisel complains that I did not devote my article to ways in which the criminal justice system could be improved and then goes on to criticize the article as if I *had* devoted it to that subject. In an article concerned with the politics of crime, and not with its substance, I specifically said that this was

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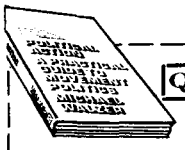

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"not the place to state in any detail what a responsible position could have been," but then I did mention, in brief, a few points to suggest, though not to explain or defend, that position. . . .

I have set forth elsewhere my views on how to approach the crime problem, especially in my chapter of the book, *Agenda for the Nation*, edited by Kermit Gordon and published by the Brookings Institution. I have also discussed this matter in a paper written for the Committee for Economic Development and in other documents. If Mr. Zeisel can't find copies of these, I would be happy to supply them for him. My COMMENTARY article was not an attempt to restate these views, but to explain why efforts to get the government to act responsibly on these matters were, for almost five years, met with moralistic slogans from the Right and suspicion and righteous denials from the Left.

But even the rebuttal offered by Mr. Zeisel to those references I did make to crime policies is misleading. Cutting off the flow of heroin into this country he treats as a "joke" on the grounds, it seems, that Anslinger and Hoover tried to do this and failed, and of course we all know the smiles that references to those names are supposed to produce. But the truth is that neither Anslinger nor Hoover was ever part of any serious attempt to deal with heroin importation—Anslinger rarely had more than a dozen agents abroad and they worked mostly on detecting foreign criminal syndicates, and the FBI did even less. Until recently, no real effort was made to induce our "allies," France and Turkey, to act responsibly toward the heroin laboratories and poppy fields within their respective borders, and it is still an open question as to whether they are fully engaged in the effort to stop the chemical warfare that their citizens have been waging against the United States for many years.

The view of Ramsey Clark which Mr. Zeisel finds convincing —that heroin addiction should be placed in perspective because there were more opiate addicts in 1900 than there are today—reminds me of the views of others that poverty and segregation are not important issues because there was more of all that in 1900 than today.

As to my juxtaposing crime and campus unrest, Mr. Zeisel is right that I placed them together as issues about which many liberals failed to talk seriously, but he is not only wrong but mischievous to suggest that I implied that campus protest was "part" of "or similar" to the problem of predatory crime.

Eugene Bardach raises for me a more sobering point. He is right to point out that in other places I have expressed little optimism about the gains to be expected from a serious effort to improve the criminal justice system. The article I wrote in 1966 was a first effort to get people generally, and liberals in particular, to take a serious but responsible look at the crime problem. As Mr. Bardach will recall, I ended the piece with the thought that unless the Left tried to deal with this issue constructively, it would be seized by the Right (as it was) and that liberalism would become a notable victim of crime in the streets (which it very nearly has). Little did I suppose that taking a critical look at crime statistics and indicating the limits of public policy would be read by some as good reasons for doing nothing.

On some matters I have changed my mind since 1966. I take much more seriously today the role of heroin addiction in accounting for a significant part of the predatory crime problem and I have come to have a greater appreciation of the extent to which street crimes are committed by repeaters for whom our court and correctional systems have been failures.

The only point at which I disagree with Mr. Bardach is in his tentative assumption that liberal politicians stayed away from the crime issue because, as statesmen, they did not want to promise much when they could deliver so little. No doubt a few felt this way, but I think Mr. Bardach will agree that this self-denying ordinance is a too generous explanation for most. After all, a decent respect for the limits of governmental capacities did not prevent liberal politicians from promising an end to racism and poverty (wasn't it Lyndon Johnson who said to the Congress, "We shall overcome"?) any more than it has kept conservative ones from assuring us that American military power is sufficient to any foreign objective we may have. The real test of statesmanship is the ability to do the right thing without having to promise the wrong thing.

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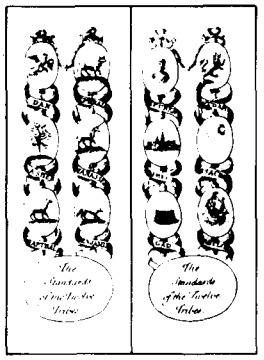

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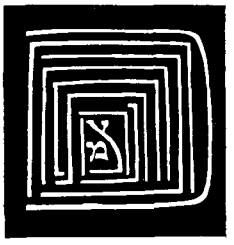

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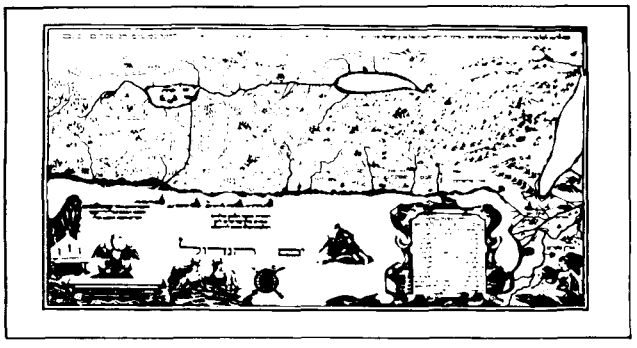

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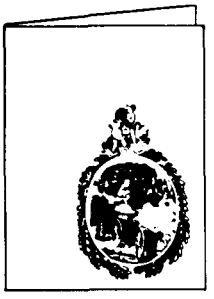

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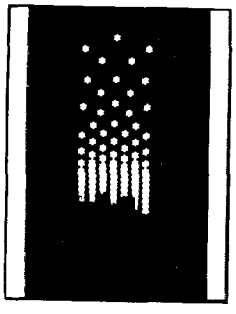

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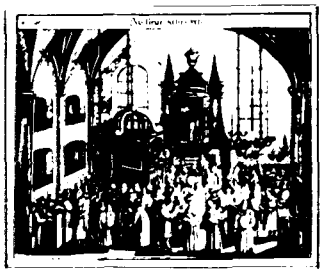

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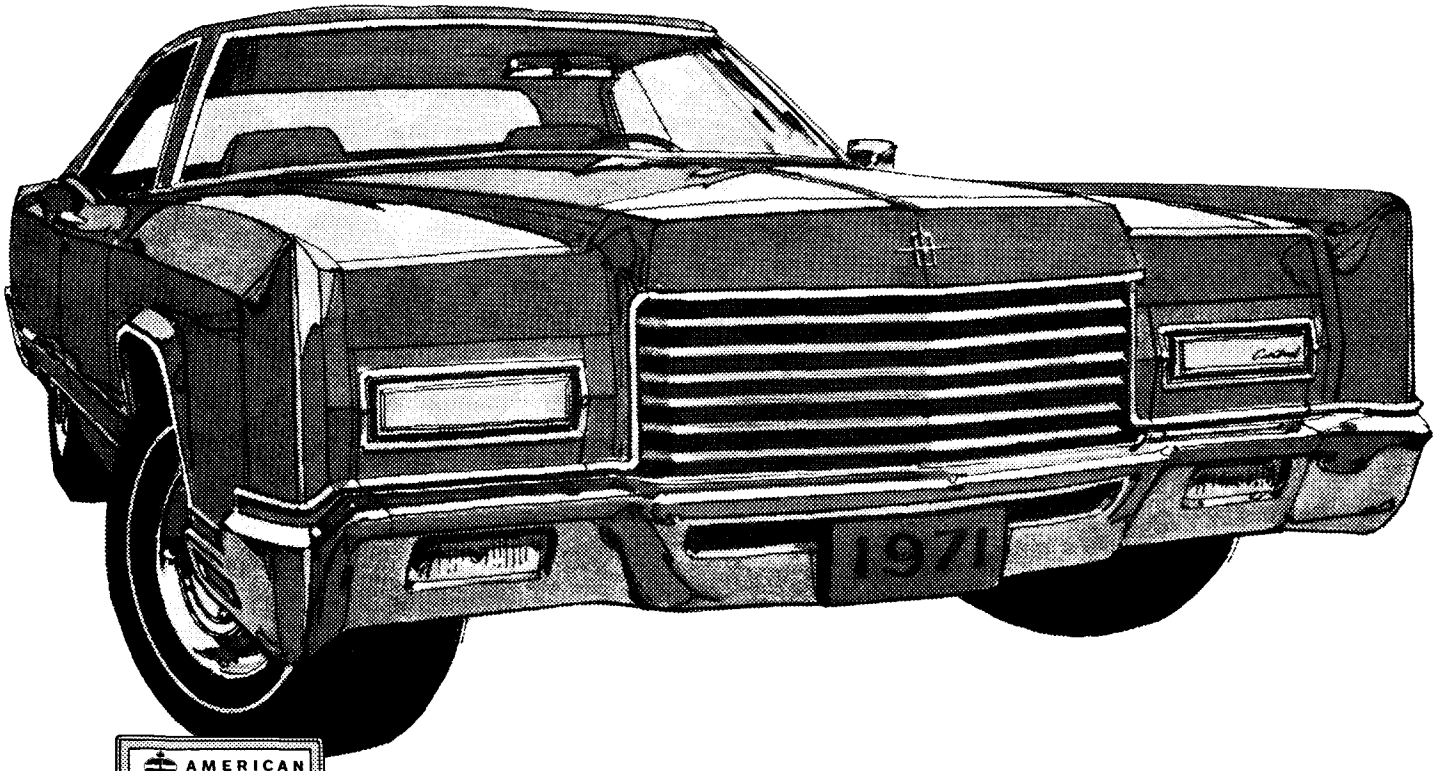

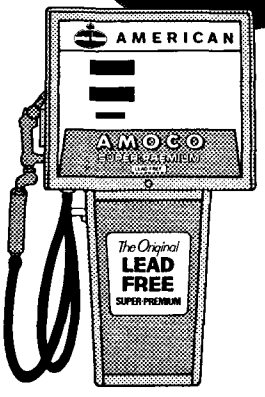

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Vietnam: The Case for Immediate Withdrawal

Nathan Glazer

ONE is embarrassed to add new words on Vietnam. Already there have been millions, and despite the good sense so many of them have shown, they have as yet, after all these years, been unable to sway the American government, through three successive administrations, to desist from a disastrous policy which can only be carried out, whatever the intentions of those at the top, by cruel and inhuman methods. Yet some of us try to convince ourselves that words can still—must still—play a role in persuading those who continue to prosecute the war that, for the United States, there is only one solution: immediate withdrawal.

Even if we overcome the sense of futility as to the possible effect of adding new words to the millions which have been spoken and written on Vietnam, many of us who value originality of thought, and who pride ourselves on writing only on the basis of what we ourselves especially know, remain embarrassed by our inability to contribute anything new to a discussion on which, it seems, everything there is to be said has already been said, and many times over at that. Yet when the government continues to defend its course with nonsense—a nonsense which men in power insist is wisdom, but immediately denounce as nonsense themselves the moment they step out of office—then even those of us who believe in the importance of a special knowledge and expertise we do not possess, may have a duty to speak out.

At the present moment, the main piece of nonsense to which we are being subjected is that Vietnamization can work, which is to say in effect that the Vietnamese war can be "Koreanized." There have been 50,000 Americans, more or less, in service on the Korean armistice borders for eighteen years. They have helped to preserve peace in Korea. They have prevented the totalitarian and bellicose regime of North Korea from invading and annexing a South Korea which now lives under a substantial degree of political and cultural freedom, and which makes considerable economic progress. Vietnamization proposes that with an investment of as few as 50,000 American troops, on guard but largely at peace, South Vietnam can be brought into a similar condition. It is perhaps for this reason that the magic figure of 50,000 is mentioned: under the Nixon policy at least that many Americans will have to be maintained in South Vietnam forever.

But how can presumably sensible men believe that the Korean model could be duplicated in South Vietnam? There has never been a front line in Vietnam behind which a state might be established and an economy built up. When there were 550,000 American troops in South Vietnam, it was impossible to make any substantial part of the country secure. Why should it be possible with 350,000 men, or with 50,000? If there is now a surcease from attacks on the cities, a respect for common sense compels one to accept the report in the New York *Times* that the guerrillas are lying low to encourage a speedy American withdrawal and not—as the American political and military authorities would have us think—that their inactivity is a proof of the effectiveness of Vietnamization.

In Kennedy's day thousands of South Vietnamese government officials in the countryside were being killed by the Vietcong. In those days, there were no North Vietnamese troops in the South. Why should these officials be any safer when there are thousands of North Vietnamese in the South? Until 1963, South Vietnam had a relatively stable government, under a civilian leader who enjoyed, or had once enjoyed, some respect from the population as a nationalist. Why should a government run by generals elected by a minority of the population—after these generals had jailed their leading opponents or removed them from the ballot—be able to create even as stable a government as existed under Diem? And if Diem could not prevent the assassination of his government's officials, and the subjection of large parts of his country to Vietcong control, what is to prevent the same thing from happening to his successors? Are they better than Diem?

Perhaps the official American hope is that all this will be prevented by the continued bombing of the South, which would keep most of the population in the cities and the refugee camps into which our bombs have already succeeded in driving them. For incredibly, we are still raining

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bombs on South Vietnam at a rate far exceeding the rate at which *all targets* in Europe and the Pacific were bombed during World War II.

On the front page of the "News of the Week in Review" section of the New York *Times* for Sunday, March 14, there appeared a table of the comparative tonnages—admirable country that publishes the volume of bombs it rains down on its enemies, who include whatever civilians happen to be found below! For the whole of World War II—2,057,244 tons; for the Indochina War—5,693,382. The rate, double that for World War II, is a million tons a year, much of it dropped on South Vietnam. Is this the way Vietnamization is supposed to work? But if so huge a volume of bombs does not prevent the North Vietnamese from occupying half of Cambodia and Laos, and from defeating the best-trained and the best-supported South Vietnamese forces, what can such a hope be based on?

MY POINT is that we needed no experience to teach us that Vietnamization was senseless. Logic alone was enough: the logic that says that 550,000 men are stronger than 350,000 or 50,000; that a civilian government with some legitimacy has more chance of stabilizing a nation than a shifting group of military men; that the administration of Lyndon Johnson drew on as much intelligence and ability as that of Richard Nixon; that North Vietnam would not grow weaker when we stopped bombing it than it was when we were bombing it day and night. Surely all this should have convinced sensible men that Koreanization—or Vietnamization—was senseless, and impossible.

Indeed, so obvious did all this seem that one assumed the Nixon administration was using the slogan of Vietnamization not because the President and his people believed in it, but simply because they were trying to find a politically palatable way out of the war. One assumed that such able politicians, whatever they might say, had a secret intention, and that was to create some breathing space between an apparently stable Korean-type American force of 50,000, and the inevitable Communist takeover, a space sufficient to permit them to declare, "*We* didn't lose South Vietnam; they, the South Vietnamese, did." In thus trying to evade a politically crippling liability, they would be following the one law according to which, as Daniel Ellsberg has argued, our policy in Vietnam was based from the very beginning: "Don't lose Vietnam before the next election."

Yet once again, simple reason could have demonstrated the senselessness of even this minimal objective. For if the Democrats could be blamed for the loss of China, even without any American military involvement there, the Republicans could certainly be blamed for the loss of South Vietnam after committing a permanent force of 50,000 men with massive bombing to boot. And so far as the breathing space is concerned, no one can guarantee the stability of a non-Communist South Vietnam for any period of time, whether six months, or a year, or eighteen months. If, indeed, anyone, no matter how knowledgeable, were to promise that under such-and-such conditions even six months of stability could be guaranteed, no one should believe him. After the endless assurances that have littered the papers from every quarter—political, military, diplomatic, technical, scholarly—for the past ten years, no further assurances of this type, whatever the source, should be given any credence.

And so the war continues to be waged for immediate objectives—either Vietnamization-Koreanization, or a breathing space between a minimal American military commitment and an eventual takeover by the Communists—that reason tells us are unattainable. How can this be explained? Is it a case of men stubbornly maintaining a belief in unattainable objectives because the alternatives are too awful to face? Perhaps. And yet when one surveys those awful alternatives, one remains mystified by the power they seem to have exerted on so many knowledgeable minds.

THE main concern of these knowledgeable minds has apparently been that the rest of Southeast Asia would fall to Communism or come under Chinese Communist influence. One is hard put to understand the weight of this fear. Burma remains independent despite the fact that it is entirely cut off from American aid and connections. Thailand now sees its hopes for independence, one reads in the newspaper, in a posture of greater neutrality; the Thais, after all, managed to maintain their independence against both England and France in the 19th century and they may hope to do as well as Burma today. India was militarily defeated by China in 1962, but China seems uninterested in doing anything more than asserting its border claims against India. Why indeed would the Chinese want to extend their control over India? India's arms, in any case, come from Russia, not the United States, while Pakistan, despite the fact that it gets its arms from us, is already friendly to China. Would this situation change if we left Vietnam? Indonesia carried out a slaughter of its own Communists, for its own reasons, and without any reference to us. Even Malaysia is menaced more by its internal ethnic conflicts than by Chinese Communist influence.

In what sense then would the menace of Communism in Southeast Asia be increased by an American withdrawal from Vietnam? We did not go into South Vietnam in any real force until 1965. By that time China had had a dozen years since the end of the Korean war to extend its influence in the absence of a significant American

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military presence on the mainland of Southeast Asia, and its record, to put the case mildly, was by no means impressive. But to argue this way is to assume that the expansion of Chinese influence, or of independent Communist governments, in Southeast Asia would necessarily constitute a threat to us. Yet the extension of Russian influence over Eastern Europe, and the maintenance of Communist governments there, however unhappy for the peoples of those countries, never posed any threat to American prosperity and security. Why should a similar development in Southeast Asia be seen as such? In any event, why should *we* carry the burden of maintaining a "security system" in Southeast Asia when Japan, the third greatest industrial power in the world, is there—leaving aside the fact that the Indians and the Pakistanis and the Burmese seem indifferent or totally opposed to this security system, that the Indonesians have no need of it, and that even Thailand and Malaysia could probably dispense with it and still maintain a degree of independence?

Another awful alternative which has preyed on many knowledgeable minds is that Europe will no longer credit our assurances of support if we should leave Vietnam. The weight of this fear is equally puzzling. One can indeed well imagine most Europeans hoping that we would *not* come to their aid if American support means the frightful devastation we have visited on Vietnam. Everything has a cost, and some costs may be too high, especially when they are being imposed on people who have not chosen them, and must suffer the death and destruction attendant upon them. Nor is it at all clear why our military commitments to Europe should play such a large role today. Western Europe as a whole is richer and more populous than Russia. If the Western European nations cannot, a quarter of a century after World War II, find the resources to defend themselves from the threat of Russia, or if they feel that the threat is too unlikely to justify taxing and otherwise inconveniencing themselves, why should we have to do it for them?

There is only one argument that makes any sense at all with regard to the damage a loss of American credibility might do to the world security system, and that is the argument that other nations can only be dissuaded from developing their own atomic weapons if they trust the United States to look after their defense. But surely the disaster of Vietnam has itself undermined the faith of other nations—Israel, for example—in the American willingness to intervene militarily on their behalf in any future conflict. For the experience of Vietnam has turned the American people into haters of war. Who else might be encouraged to develop a nuclear deterrent if we were to leave South Vietnam: India? Japan? Possibly. Even so, it should be possible to divorce the question of our ineffectiveness in the kind of war we have tried to fight in Vietnam from the question of the credibility of our nuclear deterrent. Anyone who wished to believe before Vietnam that we would really unleash our nuclear weapons to defend our allies and friends is still free to believe it now.

One hears less these days about still another unthinkable alternative to our departure from Vietnam—the slaughter of those who oppose Communism in South Vietnam, and of those who have worked with us in fighting it. One hears less about this not because the danger has diminished but, I am sure, because speaking of it would inevitably sound hypocritical when hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese civilians have already died largely as a consequence of American military action. Wesley Fishel, no friend of North Vietnam, estimates that 50,000 landlords were slaughtered when the North Vietnamese state was set up. Double that figure or triple it—it still comes nowhere near the number of civilians killed in the war. And if we are really troubled by the chances of a massacre of anti-Communist Vietnamese in the South, we can offer them refuge here in America. After all we have absorbed 400,000 Cubans since Castro came into power. We could do as well for the Vietnamese.

But what of the domestic consequences? Here what we must avoid, we are told, is the rise of a resurgent Right, the growth of a "stab-in-the-back" myth. This was perhaps a reasonable fear during an earlier stage of the war. But even then such a fear should have been outweighed by other considerations. How many foreigners must one kill after all to preserve American domestic stability? In any case, where is the pro-war sentiment? No one has ever been able to organize more than a dispirited handful to demonstrate in favor of the war. Even the hard-hats rose not in support of the war itself but in opposition to the unpatriotic and unconventional behavior of the students. By now the extreme Right itself seems ready to abandon the adventure, to see an end to the killing of Americans in a war that its own leaders find almost impossible to justify. It has been a long time since these leaders—Governor Wallace, Governor Reagan—have appealed with any conviction to the fear of an expanding Communism. It is the rise of the Negro, welfare costs, crime, and pornography that have become the bases of right-wing appeal, not the spread of Communism.

There are indeed serious domestic consequences to Vietnam, but they are already here, and they will neither be averted by the achievement of a stable non-Communist state in South Vietnam, even if that were possible, nor exacerbated by an immediate American withdrawal. The truth is that we are already living with the consequences of an American defeat even if our polit-

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ical leaders refuse to accept the fact. And in the eyes of much of the college youth and most of the intellectuals, it is a defeat the country deserves. For them America had already lost its innocence and its virtue and become a morally despicable and even criminal force. The response to Lieutenant Calley's conviction exposes another domestic consequence of the war that we can no longer avert, whatever now happens in Vietnam: that is, the anger of those who actually fight in wars and who will now blame the "Establishment" —different branches, but often the same persons— for first setting the policies and giving the orders and then saddling the "little man" with the responsibility for having carried them out.

Why then, in view of all this, are we still in Vietnam? However meaningless the government's arguments, is there not a meaning to our presence, and must we not understand that meaning before we can understand how our government can be persuaded, influenced, or forced to withdraw? For myself, I have an answer, but it does not fully satisfy me. As we began moving into Vietnam in the early 60's and as our involvement grew, I could think of only one reason. Certainly there were the elaborate calculations of experts on foreign policy as to why one thing was necessary to prevent another; the domino theory, etc. Certainly there was the fear among political leaders of the charge of being soft on Communism. Both played a role in getting us in, and in keeping us in. But neither of these factors nor the two of them in combination could by themselves have led us into so massive a military adventure. There was also an institutional feature of the situation that made our entry into the war possible and permitted its continual enlargement.

When an administration does anything in domestic affairs, it affects its own people directly. Someone is helped, someone is hurt, and in a democratic polity, those who are helped and those who are hurt have ways of letting the government know quickly and clearly. Of course, this does not by itself insure good domestic policies. There is the problem that those who are helped may be few and have a powerful incentive to maintain a bad policy or that those who are hurt may be more broadly diffused, each bearing only a moderate hurt, and therefore not strongly motivated to overturn a bad policy; and the reverse is also possible. Nevertheless, domestic policies tend to get responses, and governments and legislators are sensitive to them. Ideology and elaborate reasoning play a relatively minor role in domestic affairs. The people affected know from experience, at least to some extent, how a given policy works, and can act on the basis of that experience.

Much the same is true of a large-scale war. Everyone finds himself involved, people know when and how they are hurt or helped, and they must give positive acquiescence if the war is to be fought at all. None of this happens when a big country fights what for it is a small-scale war. There the destruction and killing are concentrated in a distant country. Those hurt by the war at home are hurt in diffuse ways—by inflation, for example—and those killed and wounded, even together with their families, make up only a tiny proportion of the population as a whole. In the case of Vietnam, our draft policies even insured that these few would be concentrated among the least politically effective and influential parts of the population, and among the ones which had always seen in the armed forces some kind of decent career. Of the people who had *strong* opinions on the war, most were probably against it. But of all who had some opinion, most, at any particular time, were ready to back the government. The war was far away, it was not a big war, it did not affect them directly, not even in the form of rationing or wage-price controls; if the President thought it necessary, they were willing to go along. Thus the government could always count on the support of a moderate if doubtful majority, in the country and in Congress, and this majority, moderate and doubtful though it might be, was sufficient to outweigh the anti-war minority, passionate though it might be and despite its growth into a near majority over the years. In every election campaign there was the hope that more anti-war Senators and Congressmen would be swept into office, but most people voted on the basis of domestic considerations about which they felt more sharply than they felt about the war. In the event, the fact that we were destroying another country seemed to carry insufficient weight.

One cannot fault the mass media in this—they told all, and from the beginning. In this war the anti-war books have far exceeded the pro-war books in number and intensity, the anti-war television programs and movies have far outnumbered the pro-war ones. For anyone who had ears to listen and eyes to see, there was nothing left hidden or unclear. It was no secret that the Tonkin Gulf incident was being used as an excuse for excessive response. Nor was it any secret that the steady increase in military power was designed to overwhelm the Vietcong rather than, as was claimed, to defend the forces we already had in Vietnam. The use of defoliants and tear gas was exposed almost as fast as it occurred. On the evening news one could see Americans putting villages to the torch (with cigarette lighters!); one knew in the most vividly concrete terms exactly what the tactics of search and destroy meant and entailed. If the details of My Lai were not made public the minute the atrocity took place, the fact that such things could happen, and were happening, was

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obvious to any person of ordinary common sense. Indeed, atrocities that differed only in scale were exposed in mass-circulation magazines long before My Lai.

Thus if it is true that the government tried to mislead the people, it is also true that the government failed in this attempt. For who could believe the promises of victory or of an early end to the war after the first dozen or so had been falsified by events and had been unambiguously revealed by television and the press to have been falsified? Of course the reaction to these official evasions varied. Some were outraged. Some understood the reasons of state that seemed to dictate them. Some were indifferent, maintaining their faith in the good sense of the government, thinking that it knew best, even when it had to lie to the people. But it cannot be said that many people actually believed what the government was telling them about the war—the mass media saw to that.

Why then were the anti-war forces unable to bring the war to an end? This is a most troubling question, and I can think of no better answer than that the war—terrible as it has been for Vietnam and for every American directly engaged—has left the United States itself relatively unharmed in a physical sense. Our territory has never been touched by the war, our economy has not been seriously damaged, and even our casualties from six years of large-scale ground combat have amounted to no more than the number of Americans killed in automobile accidents in the course of an ordinary year. Morally the effect of Vietnam has been enormous, greater in some ways than the impact of any war in the history of the nation. But the moral damage was not enough in itself to get us out of the war.

How then does a passionate minority get a big country out of a small war? Again and again the same answer has been given by those of us who have opposed the use of extreme or violent tactics both on the ground that they were often wrong in themselves and on the ground that they would probably do more to discourage than to encourage the growth of anti-war sentiment in the country at large. That answer has been to pursue political work in all its various forms, to argue and persuade and pressure until a majority of the Congress could be brought to end the war by refusing if necessary to finance it any longer—as indeed the Democratic party now proposes to do if an American withdrawal is not completed by the end of 1971.

TRAGICALLY inadequate though this answer may be, there simply is no other, and it is better at least than the idea that *nothing* can change until the "system"—whatever that is—undergoes some unspecified radical change. As one ponders the reasons that brought us into the war and maintained our involvement in it, one does not easily envisage any systemic alternatives that might have prevented a disaster of this kind. Radicals seize eagerly on the recent discovery that there is oil in the area to explain why we are there. Now—seventeen years after Eisenhower's promise, ten years after Kennedy's renewal of his commitment, six years after Johnson turned it into a massive land war—they have finally found an explanation, the only explanation that will satisfy them: capitalism is to blame. But capitalism clearly had little to do with the matter. As to politics, many of us are convinced that the President has become too powerful in foreign affairs—but he became so powerful in the first place for what seemed good and sufficient reasons, and the elected representatives of the people have continued to give him a relatively free hand. Was it then democracy itself that was at fault, because elected representatives refused to limit the President, and because our leaders kept us in Vietnam for fear of what would happen to them at the polls if they could be accused of losing a war? If that were so, we would expect non-democratic countries to have a better record in staying out of senseless and destructive wars. But, as we know, they do not. Nor should we underestimate the effect of the political opposition to date. It has toppled one President, steadily increased the number of anti-war Senators and Congressmen, and may already have cost a second President his chance for reelection.

The war in Vietnam was not made by systems. It was made by the decisions of men who might have decided otherwise. It will come to an end when men decide that, whatever the costs of ending it, they are exceeded by those of continuing it. Now, in the aftermath of the Laotian episode, we may hope that a continued and determined opposition to the war will hasten the day when that decision is made.

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A Look at Israel

Midge Decter

It is impossible, of course, to experience Israel as one might, or even might not, experience any other place on earth. For one thing, the country's peculiar history, ancient as well as modern, seems to press upon the visitor some unspoken but inescapable demand that he arrive at a judgment which will in the end be either a simple affirmation or denial. The very surroundings contrive to suggest that what he sees does not necessarily exist outside the eye of the beholder: he finds himself like a member of the audience at *Peter Pan* being requested to applaud in order that Tinker Bell need not disappear from the stage. This demand is certainly exacerbated by—though not, I suspect, initially created by—the fact that the country, and a large number of its inhabitants before they settled there, have for thirty-five years been thrown into a continuing series of contentions for their literal survival. One does not forget for a single day that this is a community which has been and continues to be in great danger, a state of mind tending to coat even trivial things with a certain fine dust of the ultimate.

Another trouble to the visitor's ordinary experience, at least if that visitor should be a Jew, is the recognition that his historic relations with the place—again ancient as well as modern—have already and without his participation been fixed. His private responses, being admittedly so irrelevant to the issue of his connection with what they are responses to, are bound themselves to get distorted. The not yet consecrated tribe who stood at the foot of Mount Sinai said to Moses, "We will do and we will listen," a statement whose contemporary application to those entering Israel might be, "We have been committed, and now we will look around."

Now, the mark of an extra or undue pressure being put upon the spirit is fatigue. And touring Israel turns out to be an incredibly, altogether disproportionately, fatiguing enterprise. In a decent car, the entire country could, I imagine, be traversed in two or three days. It surely boasts many fewer occasions for the customary ritual exertions of sightseeing—and those it does boast are usually far less exacting of time and the energies of concentration—than, say, even a minor Western European country; there are no great works of art, for instance, no architectural wonders, no museums, churches, synagogues whose treasures cannot be yielded up in a single visit or even, as is often the case, at first sight. Except for certain delimited areas, the climate is agreeable, and in the whole country there are only three or four cities whose heart and character do not fully reveal themselves through an automobile window. Israel, that is, should be an easy country to "do." And yet one finds oneself after a very short time goaded by the impulse to pull back, cut short, cancel a plan, spend the morning in bed. At this point, one substitutes dutifulness for curiosity, with that bracing of the shoulders and setting of the face that is the universal sign among tourists of the arrival of a sense of grim obligation. Thus in two weeks, in three weeks, the tourist to Israel will have seen far more than he has been able to see comfortably, far less than he had wished, and far, far from everything.

Moreover, having dealt somehow with his weariness and opened himself to another and yet another object of contemplation, he is likely to find that what he is actually looking at is not at all the same thing as the Israelis claim to be showing him. Precisely because it is so young, Israel is a country steeped in memories: the intimacy bred in the community's shared hardships and crises having, as it were, left each man a full proprietor of events in the lives of all the others. Perhaps, too, simply not enough generations have yet come and gone to have produced the ease of taking one's surroundings for granted, without being conscious of the past. In any case, it is often some memory, quite invisible to an outsider, to which the tourist, in the guise of his being shown the new, is brought. The Israeli who has brought him must by now look upon and understand a great deal of the world only, and quite automatically, in relation to what had been there before. No society that has developed so quickly and willfully as Israel's can fail to remind its own members at every turn of just how far they

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and it have traveled. And when an Israeli points out or describes some object or place of interest to a foreign guest, the chances are he is referring not so much to the object itself as to that metaphysical space he knows to be stretching backward between it and nothing.

Thus, for example, one spends a number of hours being driven through housing projects on the outskirts of Tel Aviv, row upon row, mile upon mile, of dismal gray or tan four-storey rectangular structures, built to house new immigrants. How, without the visual memory of transit camps, lean-tos, barracks, or whatever, is one to respond to such a sight? One's real response would seem—measured against the memory and the need—frivolous; on the other hand, the response being asked and expected of one, that some kind of marvel has here been achieved, would be patronizing. The housing projects are ugly, all new housing in Israel, except for Jerusalem, is ugly, and ugly in a way that any American can recognize as one which will not soften with time but only further the perpetuation of ugliness. Are these projects then a marvel despite the evidence of one's eyes? The Israeli is entitled to think so, for he lives in his own recent past and does not yet enjoy the luxury of second thoughts about the future.

Or, for another example, out on the road one is detoured several miles in order to catch sight of a new town in the Negev, or routed so as to be able to see a new industrial district appended to an old town in the North. The town in the Negev, like all Jewish settlements in that wilderness, begins and ends abruptly, as if cut out and pasted down onto the endless expanse of dry brown earth with some glue extracted out of human substance. The Bedouins seem to nestle into the Negev landscape; the Jews have slapped themselves down upon it. The town looks in fact an unthinkable place to live—huddling, gimcrack, turned in upon itself in a denial of the emptiness around. One knows that it is not unthinkable, though clearly without amenity, or even unlivable, any more than once were all those towns in Utah, Wyoming, Arizona. Yet nowhere is there any record that the inhabitants of the early American Western town, let alone their compatriots back East, ever regarded it a showplace for the edification of visitors.

Families who settle in such places in the Negev are offered certain economic advantages, and perhaps at least as important, there is no small element of service to government and society involved for them. Yet the honest reaction of the passing stranger, despite its being no doubt presumptuous of him to react on anyone's behalf but his own, is to shudder. As is his utter blankness in the presence of, say, the chocolate works, or his numb, weary knowingness at the sight of the belching chimneys that for no apparently necessary reason line the seafront north of Haifa.

Israel has in general been astonishingly little touched by the fact that it lives along the edge of the sea; only a few miles inland one does not feel the presence of water at all. Haifa clings to a steep hillside and looks out over a busy harbor, as does many another Mediterranean city, but Haifa has upon it the feel not of the adventurer, not even of the sober and crafty fisherman, but of the good gray burgher. Tel Aviv, which is, so to speak, the public beach of the country, seems to carry the sea and all its attendant paraphernalia—including the inevitable Hilton—along behind as an afterthought. Tel Aviv does not even smell of the sea but rather of the soil from inland citrus groves. The Arab town of Qantara, cut in two by the Suez Canal and with the Israel-occupied half moldering deserted in the plaster-dust of 1967's bombardment, still speaks more, in its colors and the jumbled agglutinative arrangement of its buildings, of the carnival of comings and goings that dominates life along a waterway. Israel's own new seaside resort is not on the Mediterranean at all, but on the northern tip of the gulf of Aqaba. In Eilat, one sits at the edge of the water, behind one a kind of plaza of shops which is a sad pasteboard replica of a bad corner in Atlantic City, and trailing one's hand in the water, brings it up coated with oil from the tankers for whose benefit the city must obviously have been put there.

To the Israeli, all of this instantaneously conjures up and makes palpable its purpose: self-defense, self-sufficiency, the settlement and employment of immigrants, even the employment of Arabs from the occupied territories. The traveler, however, sees first what is present before his eyes. That which his imagination must supply would possibly better reward his effort to imagine from a distance.

But if Israelis have memories that serve to disjoin meaning from material presence, so, too, do American Zionists. It is not important, as it is with the Israelis, what these memories are; in my own case, I realized that they had been compounded out of scenes from movies, lines from old Hebrew songs, and moments of inflamed rhetoric extracted from the torrent of speech that constituted the central experience of being a Zionist in the United States. A main focus of this, my own first journey, then, I had imagined would be the kibbutz—the kibbutz being a major instrument of the kind of commitment to Palestine/Israel which once sought to transcend "merely" the Jews and compel vindication from mankind itself. In my youth we argued much about the kibbutz, and, we thought, much to the point: would this new society indeed produce its intended miracle—that is, a human nature transformed by the elimination of the main occasions for meanness and greed—or would it, on the contrary, result in only a further con-

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striction of that nature—that is, the substitution for greed and petty ambition of a gray puritanical oppression of the individual by the group?

How was I to be prepared for the discovery that a kibbutz, salvation or damnation, transcendent new society or dustbin of failed transformations, was . . . a farm? I was, to be sure, quite aware that the kibbutzim engaged primarily in farming —that, too, was crucial to their ideology and mine —but from such awareness I had not even come near the image of those flat monotonous fields, unbroken by any visual mark of the drama that had created them, stretching to their termination at a dusty road or property line—the same as must be required anywhere in the world for the growing of cotton or corn or wheat. Degania Aleph, weeping Rachel of the whole movement, sits somnolently by the side of the road (for some reason, I can never envision History as taking place alongside an ordinary thoroughfare, accessible to any passing mortal; History must be climbed up to or stumbled down upon) near the Sea of Galilee, giving no physical hint of anything but a usually drab farm life—with neither marker nor monument to set her apart.

Nor did it ever in all those arguments occur to us that the kibbutz might in the actual event spell out neither of the alternatives we contended over. We left no room in our imaginings for the possibility that it would neither liberate nor oppress, but rather constitute itself a community of people who by the way they lived together might more or less successfully allay certain problems and more or less unintentionally exacerbate others. From the inside, kibbutzniks seem about as serene and about as anxious as other people, though perhaps in different ways. An evening's visit with a small private gathering in Kfar Blum—a settlement in the far north containing, to my social relief and convenience, a number of English-speaking former Americans—revealed a sense of life which was, while worlds apart from my own, in things essential not so different from my own as I had led myself, and been led, to believe. Such steady, unfancy, ironclad public good manners between husbands and wives, parents and children, as prevailed in one small room would be bound to touch any contemporary American with the experience of having mislaid something he had not, until he caught sight of it, remembered was missing. On the other hand, there was tension, too, the tension that derives from the impulse to defend a life so grown upon itself, so circumscribed, as no longer merely to disdain but to fear that other life outside.

The kibbutzim, at least a very large number of them, prosper. It is hard to know whether or not, as might be conventionally thought, their relative prosperity has contributed to the gap one finds in visiting them between the quotidian and the legendary. If so, the legend must, like the legends surrounding many a human enterprise, have been ruthless and irresponsible. Nevertheless, a drive through the Valley of Jezreel and the Galilee is like a drive through most farming lands: truly interesting, to those genuinely bereft of earthy pieties, not for its cultivation but for what, exactly, has persisted in escaping that cultivation.

THOUGH in not so dramatic a contrast as that encountered in the Negev, Jewish settlement everywhere in the country gives the impression of having been superimposed upon, rather than having developed in a working partnership with, the landscape. Tiny as it is, Israel is a complex composition, a veritable symphony, of wildernesses. Not counting the dazzling Sinai —a desert such as children poring over their storybooks might dream a desert to be—there are no fewer than five distinct shades and conformations of wilderness crowding upon and lurking beneath the civilization there: brown, red, gold, lavender, and gray. A thorny and inscrutable deity is this God Who gave His children a religion for the sanctification of everyday life and then led them to a terrain so much of which, even in the days of milk and honey, must have seemed awesomely hostile to life (and Who indeed beckoned them there again in our own time). The famous Jewish unconcern with beauty may not, as is usually said, have resulted from the religious injunction against the fashioning of graven images but from a deeper experienced knowledge that beauty was, and remains to this day, the enemy of that which the people was being required to do. For what is most immediately and unquestionably beautiful in Israel is one or another form of wilderness, and everything the Israelis have succeeded in doing to make the place viable, a jarring, one might almost say unsuitable, interruption of its harsh splendor.

A standard notion, both for good and ill, is that Israeli society represents the vanguard incursion of Western technology into the Middle East. So standard is the notion, in fact, that it would be easy to find in this idea a kind of reductive rationale for the sudden looming of little self-contained cities in the middle of nowhere, or the sprouting of whole pine forests out of rock, or miles of orderly plantings in what the morning mists announce by rights to be a swamp. All these human impositions exist, however, not thanks to the sound principles of technology but, on the contrary, by virtue of an absolute contradiction of them. "Technology" is based on the efficient, if necessary ingenious, and profitable use of available resources; a properly trained technologue might have looked upon the country at the end of World War I and dreamed of one vast quarry or minerals factory. He could surely never have imagined anything as foolish, as clumsy and tenuous, as a great long pipe with one end stick-

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ing into the Sea of Galilee and the other more than a hundred miles away releasing water for vegetables onto a plot of earth unsown and unharvested probably for millennia. The particular political, strategic, and humanitarian necessities of Israel as these evolved over five decades could never have been met by the application of sound economic or material principles, no matter how helpful certain by-products of such principles have proven to be once the necessities were defined. It is not technology for which the Jewish state has served as vanguard in the Middle East, but the sheer, unswerving, uncalculating, incalculable force of human will. And it is undoubtedly also for this that the Jewish state is most roundly feared and hated by its neighbors; for there is a truly terrible, and permanently disquieting, message in it. "If you will it, it is not a dream." If you do not will it, all the science of the Western world will not help you.

The Arabs, who clearly do not have, or rather have not yet recognized themselves to have, such necessities know better how to live with what they see around them. The muddiest Arab village, the seediest Bedouin encampment, provides a more aesthetically pleasing acknowledgment of the nexus between man and the accidents of nature than the most celebrated of Israel's agricultural triumphs. Whatever wonders this ultimate, redeeming burst of Jewish will may yet produce, it is not likely that an unpresuming harmony with the given—the source, after all, of most man-made beauty—will be among them.

Except, after all, there is Jerusalem, Jerusalem the golden. On a sunny day it is just that, a stony representation of gold, and indisputably one of the handsomest cities in the world. Jerusalem, moreover, is one of those places, like Paris, which offer themselves up, immediate and whole, to the passing glance. The Jews did not make Jerusalem, but they seem to have learned, perhaps under British tutelage, how not to be hasty or careless with her.

To see Jerusalem properly is to look out from some high window or promontory and to take in hill and valley, old and new, public and secret, bustling and indolent, all at a glistening once. Even the layer upon layer of history that presumably makes the city a magnet for pilgrims and sightseers is better taken in grand summation than piece by piece. For the closer one comes to them, the more do these pieces crumble into scholarly abstraction and fail, finally, to yield their full measure of impact. Jerusalem, the centuries-old repository of longings for redemption, Jewish *and* Christian, has simply been given no monumental correlative commensurate with the feelings it arouses. Gethsemane, Calvary, the Stations of the Cross, for instance, these exist not nearly so vividly on their putative sites as they surely have existed as sentiments carried in the Christian heart. (It takes a heart of stone, as Oscar Wilde once remarked of the death of Little Nell, not to laugh out loud during the tour one is given by a cinematically shifty Arab guide through the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.) Similarly with that great catch-all of sentiment, the Holy Temple, in the Jewish heart. One is told of Israelis, Jews from all over, who come, some of them nightly, to weep at the Wall. But surely what they weep for is the repossession of the right to their chosen, appointed city, and thus in a sense for the repossession of their own full selves. The Wall, flat and uncommunicating under the icy glare of spotlights, is by now a piece of stage business. What one feels most unaffectedly in contemplating the Old City is not the connection with the ancient history of one's people, not even pride in the exploits that have pushed down the last, most insulting barrier erected for the purpose of exiling the Jews, but rage: pure rage for the wanton, meaningless destruction of Jewish houses and synagogues wreaked in 1948 and left untouched to serve as a permanent, sullen provocation, rage at the marks of a bootless malice simply no longer, not once more ever again, to be tolerated. Beside such a direct and cathartic emotion the exercise of pointing out to oneself that here, say, beneath this dirt, within that pile of rocks, once stood the city of David, is bound to feel just that—an exercise.

Jerusalemites tend to have a relation to their city reminiscent of that once attributed to Old Bostonians. By their bearing they hint to one that they are in full possession of a treasure one may prove oneself worthy to share. They are, in short, the provincials of the capital. It is a scandalous opinion to prefer Tel Aviv, rather as it would be for a cultivated American to confess, if he could ever summon up the nerve, a preference for Los Angeles over San Francisco. Yet the truth is that Tel Aviv is an easier, emotionally more rewarding city to find oneself in than Jerusalem. While not the capital, neither actually, spiritually, nor in effect, Tel Aviv is the country's authentic metropolis. It does not fancy itself, it lets one be, and it hates itself a little, maintains a certain irony, in relation to an imagined larger world. That is why the juices of the society's cultural life flow from there—not because it is "cultured" but because it is relaxed and breezy and can afford to leave some houseroom for the slightly disreputable. Jerusalem is the chief jewel in Israel's crown, its most precious artifact. Tel Aviv is the solid underpinning of Israel's true character: like it, gracelessly put together, and like it, the assertion, without fuss or fastidiousness, of first things first.

What those first things may be, however, the traveler discovers not in Tel Aviv, not in the country out there, but in himself. As he clambers over rocks to look into one of the deserted Syrian bunkers dug into the Golan Heights; as he is

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taken into one of the underground shelters built to house the babies and small children of the settlements whose every movement could be spied upon by enemy troops deployed in those bunkers; or as he, should he be privileged to visit an Israeli position at the Suez Canal, meets the boyishly disheveled nineteen- and twenty-year-olds whose dangerously punishing tour of duty in the desert heat must, for the sake of their mental and physical welfare, be punctuated by a regulated rhythm of leaves; as he, in other words, gives himself up to the calm and practical determination of the populace that it need not and will not lose, he learns what years of suasion and apologetics could not teach him. He learns what touring the country, even did he find it agreeable, could not illustrate for him. By some large, not yet fully comprehended irony he learns in fact what early Zionism was probably intended to signify and then almost immediately buried beneath the trappings of self-justification. The real experience of Israel is a reminder—stark and unavoidable—that it is better to live than to die. The Six-Day War, no matter the outcome of a peace settlement, or even of the failure to reach one, was a watershed in 20th-century Jewish history. For the meaning of that war turns out to have been an unequivocal statement by the Jews —the first, if need be, of a long series—that they are alive, like any other men, because they are alive, and, perhaps in this case like only some other men, that they intend in the most basic and primitive way to continue to be so.

Zionism's mistake, an understandable one, lay in its felt need to justify Jewish aspirations for a national home in terms more high-flown, more "dignified," possibly, than the issue of mere survival. But for mortal men—and for Jews particularly—there can be no more dignified, no more enlarging or enriching, an issue. The State of Israel is finally justified by nothing more, and requires nothing more, than its own existence. So one comes truly to understand why in Israeli idiom the Hebrew word for Zionism means bombast.

These days in America it is not at all uncommon to hear from those who have abjured for themselves, and so would deny others, the struggle of standing one's own ground certain expressions of fear that Israel has become a garrison state, a "militarist" power. The truth is that friendless as they deeply, suspiciously, Jewishly—and, in my opinion, accurately—believe themselves to be, surrounded by people who would love to see them dead, and, in the concentric circle beyond these, people whose love may only be bestowed if they consent to die, Israelis as a society are at this moment probably the happiest men on earth. They are certainly the most cheerful, the most bustling about their daily lives, the most harmoniously tuned to the tending of their business, and the most tolerantly accepting of personal inconvenience. Israel may not be—as I at least found it not to be—a wonderful place to visit, but it *is* a place to live.

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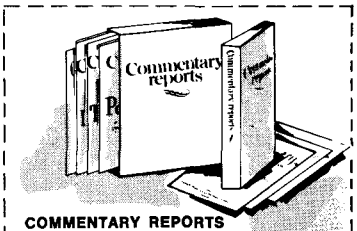

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Inventing the Young

Joseph Adelson

I WAS recently told the following story: A nationally known authority on the young was asked to speak to an adult audience in his community. He arrived bearing a tape recorder and announced to his listeners that to understand today's youth one has to listen to its music, whereupon he turned on the recorder to a selection of rock music, and while the audience watched in numb amazement, danced before the lectern. After about twenty minutes of music and dancing he undertook the lecture proper which berated adults for victimizing the young, who were described as tribunes of a new era of peace and love. In the midst of this harangue he was interrupted by a messenger and left the stage, to return shortly and declare: "I must leave. My students need me." And left, taking the tape recorder, but leaving behind a dazed and enraged audience.

I treasure this anecdote, not only for its grotesque charm, and for its demonstration of how much an apostle of Love will allow himself, but also because it illustrates so vividly the temptations besetting an expert on the young.

It shows how we move to closeness, and beyond that to identity, with those we study; I will return to this later. It also shows the degree to which we *invent* the young. I choose the word "invent" precisely for its ambiguity. We invent, in the first sense, in that we construct or hypothesize our social categories. We do so because we must, since social theory, even when "empirical" in character, rests ultimately upon some invention or model of society and its categories. But I use the word "invent" in another sense as well, to connote fancy and the making of myths. Here too we invent because we must, since the young are in fact so diverse, complex, and obscure that they force us to imagine not so much what is out there, in reality, as what is inside our minds. Hence we invent what we wish to perceive. We invent the young so that they may, like figures in a morality play, take their places in that larger tableau of social action that our minds have devised.

The incident I have recounted also informs us of the two dominant imaginings of the young—as victims and as visionaries. When our expert makes his sudden departure, crying out that his students are in need of him, we are offered a dramatization, in miniature, of the theme of the oppressed young; we take it that they are suffering some brutality and require the nurturance and protection of their leader. When he tells his audience that the young herald an era of love and understanding he is casting them as visionaries, prophets of a new age. Between them, the images of victim and visionary control our current perception of youth. The view of the young as victimized receives its most intense expression in the writings of Edgar Z. Friedenberg, who represents American society roughly along the lines of Kafka's *In the Penal Colony,* with its educational system an equivalent of "The Harrow." The view of the young as seers, as millenarian prophets, has found its most extreme spokesman in Charles Reich, who sees every twitch of the elite youth culture—its postures, its argot, the very flare of its trousers—as silently prefiguring a new age of amity and equality.

More often than not the two images coalesce. Either the young are oppressed because of their visionary capacity, because they see so fully what the established powers fear to see at all; or because their victimization, the very posture of humiliation they are forced to endure, allows them a prescience beyond the common understanding. The figure of the prophetic victim, though it draws upon traditional religious imagery, and though it resonates with earlier American archetypes (Billy Budd, for example), becomes the dominant image of the young in the postwar era. It flowers initially in the writing of J. D. Salinger —in Holden Caulfield and the Glass family, the first of these stressing victimization, the second a fatal visionary talent. In the 1960's it sweeps all before it: can we recall a novel or film on youth during this decade which does not in one way or another evoke these images?

And in the 1960's we note an important change. The young victim now transcends his victimization; he overcomes his passivity and in doing so achieves strength and heroism. He is the prophet armed, his rebellion justified by his prior oppression, his vision of a better world setting the goals of his movement. Indeed in this decade

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the themes of oppression, prophecy, and rebellious heroism become the dominant motifs of collective fantasy, as the metaphor of victimization is politicized, and as other groups—blacks, women, homosexuals, freaks, prisoners, the psychotic —are defined, by themselves, or more often through self-appointed spokesmen, as victims, visionaries, and revolutionary heroes.

All of which makes for spirited sermons, stirring political rhetoric, best-selling fiction, and popular motion pictures. It also makes for bad art, bad history, and bad social science. To the degree that these images possess us, they constrict and coarsen our experience. When we can see ourselves and others only as victims, villains, and heroes, we reduce brutally the range of our grasp of the human. Thus what we find (or should find) offensive in Women's Liberation literature is a representation of both men and women so gross as to remind us of sado-masochistic pornography—the men ravening beasts, the women terrorized and fawning slaves. Through this last sorry decade, as the obsessions of militancy have seized us, we witness a painful retrogression in intellectual and artistic life: think of the distance we have traveled, ever backward, from Ralph Ellison to LeRoi Jones, or in feminine psychology from Helene Deutsch to Kate Millett. As Richard Hofstadter said shortly before his death, we have been living in "an age of rubbish."

II

IT MAY BE said that we cannot demand of polemical literature that degree of complexity we look for in more measured and reflective writing. But the point is that these days the polemical spirit will not voluntarily contain itself. It spreads into art and scholarship, concealing itself by simulating the devices and mannerisms of the media it invades.

As a case in point, that large and ever-growing body of writing on the young radical. Given the general susceptibility to illusion when we consider the young; given the ease with which the polemical impulse, wittingly or not, can express itself on the topic of radicalism; given the widespread erosion of self-discipline in the social sciences (as the need to be "relevant" escalates); given all these, it is not at all surprising to discover how much of the work on student activism is at the least suspect and at the worst near to worthless, in that the necessary boundaries between illusion and reality, and between polemics and scholarship seem irretrievably blurred. The problem is not so much in those writings, and they are many, which are more or less openly tendentious. When we read someone like Richard Flacks (a founding member of SDS), or a Friedenberg, we can, if we so choose, exercise our own forms of skepticism as we judge the work. The more subtle complications are to be found in that scholarship which presents itself to us (and often believes itself to be) dry, objective, unillusioned. One of the best examples is Kenneth Keniston's *Young Radicals*, which is also the most influential and widely known treatise on activist youth.

Keniston's view of the radical young is difficult to present in brief compass: let me stress its emphases. The radical young are drawn from families in the managerial and professional classes. Far from being rebellious toward or alienated from parental values, they in fact share and wish to implement them. They are intelligent, cosmopolitan in outlook, academically successful. Their histories are in fact marked by success, but at some point along the way they begin to question conventional definitions of success, and become preoccupied with the discrepancy between the ideals that they have learned and internalized, and the various moral failures of American society. Thus, they find themselves committed, and their commitment brings further commitment and ultimately radicalization. This summary is, let me confess, skeletonized, perhaps to the point of caricature; but I believe that it captures the essence of the argument. It may not, however, capture the susurrus of commendation which lies behind it.

What is wrong with this account is as much or more in what it omits, in what it chooses not to perceive, as in what it says. Let us say that it bears the same relationship to the realities of the radical scene as a picture of a smiling, ruddy Stakhanovite worker bears to Soviet industrial reality. To put it another way, it is a kind of court portraiture: the warts have been removed, the blemishes hidden, the chin strengthened. We are asked to attend only to beauty, grace, and strength. It is, in short, a Panglossian exercise. Not unexpectedly, students on the Left appreciate Keniston's assessment of them and are fond of citing it—an ominous sign, I should think, for an objective study. Nevertheless, there has been, even on the Left, some rising conviction that Keniston's muted panegyrics do not quite tell the whole story. For example, I recently saw an unpublished study of radical activists, carried out by scholars whom I believe to be of Left sympathies, which makes much of the impulsivity, the provocativeness, and the compulsive oppositionalism of the radical young who had been interviewed. Not long ago a radical student of mine confessed, albeit with some chagrin, that he found Keniston's book to be effusive and one-sided. Although he himself remained a radical, he said his own experience in radical politics had been bitterly discouraging. He pointed to the intellectual dogmatism which so often made it difficult to share common action; to an endemic depressiveness among radical students, and their tendency to overcome it in spasms of action; and above all to a hypersensitivity to opposition

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which made personal relationships rancorous when not in fact explosive. In recent months I have more than once heard radical faculty members lament the frenzy and irrationalism of their radical students.

To such observations, however occasional, from those on the Left, we must add equally mordant assessments from less friendly sources: the pervasive anti-intellectualism of so many members of the Movement, and with it, the preference for jargon, slogans, and cant as against hard thought, especially in the realm of politics; the quality my colleague Frederick Wyatt has called "target hunger"—the restless, relentless search for enemies and conspiracies; the curious mixture of public piety and private cynicism among leaders of the Movement; the even more curious mixture of self-pity, self-indulgence, and self-admiration we find in many radical personalities; the shallow, shifting quality of personal ties in the Movement. To be sure, these tendencies, singly or together, by no means characterize all of those on the Left. But they are to be found with more than the ordinary frequency, as both sympathetic and disenchanted witnesses of the Movement have noted.

Yet in a book—an entire book, after all—which purports to offer a portrait in depth of the radical personality, there is a persistent obtuseness to these and other negative qualities. It is illuminating to interpose, as I have recently done, readings of *Young Radicals* between readings of the current underground press. The one is all sweetness and light and high moral purpose, the other slogans and self-righteousness, and above all else, a murderous hatred. The one Woodstock, the other Altamont.

Which brings us, as it must, to the topic of violence, that bone in all our throats. If there is anything which has characterized the Movement, which has distinguished it from other expressions of American radicalism in this century, it has been the infatuation with violence. The incidents of actual violence—the bombings, the arson, the vandalism, the personal assaults—are far from being the entire story; they rest upon those incitements to destruction which dominate so much of the radical press, and the quality of indifference and indeed insouciance with which leaders of the Movement accept and indulge the more than occasional eruptions into real violence. (On this too, more later.) To say that Keniston has been insensitive to the presence of violence is, if anything, to understate the case. In his view, young radicals are not only free from the disposition to violence, they are in fact entirely opposed to it; they are victims rather than instigators. He tells us that:

> Although in behavior most of these young radicals were rather *less* violent than their contemporaries, this was not because they were indifferent to the issue, but because their early experience and family values had taught them how to control, modulate, oppose, and avoid violence. Verbal aggression took the place of physical attack. They learned to argue, compromise, and to make peace when confronted with conflict. Still, too, although their adolescent experience was full of inner conflict, they acted on their violent feelings only during a brief period of indignant rebellion against the inconsistencies of their parents. These young radicals are unusual in their sensitivity to violence, as in their need and ability to oppose it.

Such a grievous misreading of reality can and I suppose will be excused on the grounds that when *Young Radicals* was written, in 1967-68, the turn to violence was not yet evident, that it grew out of the frustrations of Vietnam, that if moves toward peace had been made at that time, the temptation to violence would have subsided. Perhaps so; we will never know. But it needed neither an in-depth study nor the wisdom of Solomon to sense, well before 1968, that the student Left was moving toward an experiment in violence. In my own case, for example, the shock of recognition came as early as 1965 when I began to discern among radical students at Michigan a violence of spirit and language, an eagerness for confrontation, which was new and strange and infinitely worrisome. One of my students, an undergraduate at an Eastern liberal-arts college during that same period, can recall a dispute about parietal hours, of all things, where there was much agitated talk among his peers about breaking windows if demands were not met. In 1966, a graduate student at Michigan carried out a study of members of SDS, at that time still officially devoted to nonviolence; one of her respondents even then was willing to write that he looked forward to "a radical movement . . . which would work for a full radical platform violently if not allowed to act nonviolently."

So it is not merely hindsight which allows one to say that by 1967 one could perceive, if one so chose, that turn to violence which has since become normative in the Movement. In any case, the question is not whether it was inevitable, and thus predictable, but whether it was visible enough as a potential to warrant some serious attention in a book devoted to young radicals. What we ask of our experts is not that they divine the future, but simply that they provide an adequate sense of the contours of the present, so that we gain some apprehension of the possible.

III

It is not difficult to see what has gone wrong. In *Young Radicals*, as in so much current work on the young, there is a fatal failure of distance. There is a good analogy to be found in the studies of a colleague of mine, who has been investigating the problems encountered

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by novice psychotherapists. The most common difficulty, it appears, is in their tendency to substitute identification for empathy. In their wish to get into the patient's skin, to see the world as he sees it, they succeed all too well, in that the impulse to empathy is insidiously transformed into identification, into a being-at-one-with, so that the therapeutic perspective is lost. In striving to see as his patient does, the young therapist takes over and begins to share those very distortions of perception which have contributed to and sustained his client's neurotic problems. Thus the patient acquires a friend and a partisan, and beyond that a double. All may go well in the short run; the patient is buoyed by his therapist's friendliness; and he may shed momentarily his habits of self-doubt and self-blame. The therapist's identification encourages the patient to externalize, to blame others, to see his problems as lying entirely outside of himself, to view himself as the victim of an unjust destiny. But in the not-so-long run, therapy begins to falter. The patient has gained a friend, but has lost the help of a disinterested presence. The therapist's compassion is not enough, nor is the self-pity or rage induced by externalization. Sooner or later, if this patient is to be helped, the therapist must urge him to look inward to deeper recesses of self and motive.

Keniston's mission was not, of course, therapeutic, but diagnostic; nevertheless the analogy stands. Like the novice therapist he seems unable to distance himself. He is all too eager to believe anything he is told. His respondents tell him they are nonviolent; he believes it. They tell him they act only out of the highest moral principles; he believes it. No doubt if they told him they could walk on water he would believe that too. In an age so bereft of belief, it is touching to find belief reborn. The ingenuousness with which Keniston has approached his topic has produced, as one would expect, a remarkably non-dynamic account of radical character. Though the language of *Young Radicals* is, much of the time, psychoanalytic, the fundamental perspective is not. It seems afraid to peer beneath the surface, to explore disinterestedly those complications of motive and experience which might give us a plausible account of the activist personality. What we have instead is a determination both to share and validate the radical world view.

In Keniston's account of radical motivation, the emphasis is constantly external; radical rage is, for example, largely reactive to the moral disarray out there, in the world. We hear much of the fear of technological death, of the sterility of organizational life, of the disappointments of affluence—all the touchstones of contemporary intellectual chic. In accepting this grammar of motives, Keniston has accepted the strategy of externalization by which the Movement and the counter-culture explains, justifies, and forgives its most dubious beliefs and deeds. What we have, then, is not analysis but journalism, and journalism of the worst sort, of the fan-magazine variety, which gushes over its subjects and makes no effort to stand aside, disengaged.

THE FAILURE of psychodynamic sensitivity can be seen in Keniston's superficial treatment of the moral dimension in radical politics. He takes the position that the radical young are actuated by universalistic moral principles: offended by the injustices of the world, unable to achieve the moral obtuseness and hypocrisy which shield the rest of us, enraged by the gaps between the ideals we profess and the callousness of our practices, they are led by morality into politics. Theirs, then, is a politics of intense moral concern.

Let me say first that I am more than a little skeptical about the universalism imputed to this political morality; for a universalistic morality it is in practice strangely selective, not to say programmed, in that it burns with outrage about certain injustices and yet is serenely indifferent about others. It rages about the death of Fred Hampton, for example, and is entirely silent about Alex Rackley; it is furious about the indictment of Angela Davis, but finds not a word to say about the innocents killed and endangered for the action for which she was indicted; and so on.

But all this is, in a way, beside the point. Even if we agree that radical politics is more morally concerned than most, should we greet this news with hosannas, or should we not, instead, respond with some fear and trembling? If there is anything this grim century has taught us, it is about what Lionel Trilling has called the "dangers of the moral life itself," that "the moral passions are even more willful and imperious and impatient than the self-serving passions" and that "their tendency is to be not only liberating but restrictive." The dangers of the moral life itself: if anyone should know them, it is the psychoanalytic psychologist. Each day reminds us of the deceits and complexities of conscience. Each day reminds us of the deeply entangled connections between the superego on the one hand and will and aggression on the other. The superego arises, in large part, out of the struggle against aggression and the unbridled will, and it is a struggle never fully won. If the superego, much of the time, constrains cruelty and license, it remains at the same time susceptible to the very corruptions it opposes. If the superego, in certain of its phases, forgives us nothing, then it can, in other moments, forgive us everything.

All of this seems to elude Keniston. Thus, when he confronts, as he now must, the joining of high moral purpose and violence in the radical movement, he resorts to the mechanism of splitting. There are, he argues, good (i.e., ethical,

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peaceful) radicals and bad (i.e., amoral, violent) ones. The violent ones are attracted to the Movement for the worst reasons and their behavior gives it a bad name. There is, I should think, some truth to this, radicals being as various as the rest of us; and yet this argument avoids all manner of hard questions. Are we to believe that peaceful and violent radicals really have so little to do with one another? Are they not sometimes in unconscious collusion, living off each other symbiotically, the peaceful ones providing the highminded rhetoric which legitimizes the rage of the violent, while the violent act out the disavowed yearnings of the peaceful? It would not be the first time in human history that the respectable elements of a movement used an underclass to do their dirty work for them. The Left would have no trouble recognizing and pointing to such collusion on the Right, as it did, and correctly, in detecting a connection of aim, though not of consciousness, between White Citizens Councils and the Klan, or between good Germans and the SS. The collusion usually consists of the familiar rationalizations—"I don't condone violence, but . . . ," and the typical mote-and-beam accusations—"The violence we may do is as nothing compared with the greater violence done by those we oppose." One might even ask whether the collusion is all that unconscious. Is it unconscious when the "respectable" leader of a campus demonstration announces to his audience before it takes to the streets that each person should feel free to express his outrage as he wishes? Is it unconscious when a scholar—most respectable, most distinguished—announces to one and all, following some gratuitous vandalism on campus, that the university "deserved a thrashing"?

But the strategy of collusion, of the right hand not quite owning up to what the left hand is doing, is only one of the many possible outcomes of the life of moral purpose. The more interesting, more hazardous, more tragic consequences are to be found within the personality itself, and it is these complications that Keniston's view of the moral life does not capture. Can there be anything more difficult, more ridden with tension than the effort to achieve a secular sainthood? And is it anywhere more difficult than in America, where there are neither the traditions nor the institutions to lend support to the effort? In the life of sainthood, that which within the self has been put aside, disavowed—rage, spite, pride, self-indulgence, duplicity—all these threaten to emerge, to overcome the self's constraints. What we know of our recent saints—of a Gandhi, a Schweitzer, a Tolstoy, now apparently a Martin Luther King—tells us of the costs to be paid, costs paid by friends, followers, family, and, above all, costs to the self's wholeness.

It is a psychoanalytic commonplace that the distended superego can be as destructive to the total personality as the unchecked id. The superego swollen in triumph will blunt or choke off the ego, and with it both reason and the full sense of reality. (Thus, the contempt for thought, and the fantastic overestimation of one's power, both so commonly noted in the radical movement.) It damages the human affections: the other comes to be seen as a mere instrument of one's moral purpose; he is a friend when and only when he is a moral ally, and even one's ally may be sacrificed to the larger good—think of the cynicism with which leaders of the Movement deploy their "masses," as at the Chicago convention. And if the other is an enemy, his rights and his very humanity count for nothing. Ultimately the superego may ally itself with the previously disavowed, darker sides of the self; and with that we have the triumph of the totalitarian spirit. We have Bernadine Dohrn, in her latest broadside, speaking, as callously as any Pentagon general, of "anti-personnel bombing." We have her telling us that though many in her collective did not want to take part in random bombing, nevertheless "they struggled day and night, and eventually, everyone agreed to do their part."

I suppose I will be understood to be saying that radicals like Bernadine Dohrn are moral monsters. To the contrary, they are not; that is the problem before us. In this connection I can only think of Diana Oughton and Bill Ayers, both of whom were students at Michigan and were known by some of my students and colleagues. Without exception, they comment on their intelligence, their charm, their personal sweetness, their moral authenticity. Then they were, for reasons unknown, transformed. They became Weathermen—tough, reckless, a little crazy. Ayers took to wearing a leather jacket, provoking fights with high-school toughs, hoping thereby to recruit them into the revolution. Then the "Days of Rage" of Chicago, and finally, the Eleventh Street townhouse explosion, where Diana Oughton was killed, and Bill Ayers escaped to go underground. What moved them from a peaceful to a violent radicalism, I do not know. Why they were so moved and not so many others just like them, I do not know. But I do know that Keniston's theory of the moral life will not contain them. His young radicals have all the moral weight and complexity of a troop of Eagle Scouts. When all is said and done, they are no more than sincere and principled and idealistic. A century after *The Possessed*, eighty-five years after *The Princess Casamassima*, a generation after Koestler, Silone, and Orwell, we have every reason to expect a harder, less sentimental, more subtle grasp of the interplay between morality and politics. Kenneth Keniston's failure to perceive the real moral tensions of the radical life, strangely enough, diminishes those he means to idealize.

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It is the moralism of the young radicals, and not their morality, which attracts Keniston, and it is that very moralism in his own writing which has made his invention of the young radical so palatable to American Establishment thought. We do like to think of our young as possessing exemplary moral vision; it speaks so well of them and equally well of ourselves. What has not been sufficiently understood is that the moralism of the Movement draws upon and continues the cursed American habit of pursuing moral uplift in the realm of politics. From Woodrow Wilson to John Foster Dulles to the present day, our hortatory mania has led us to the brink of disaster and beyond. At the same time the moralizing style is quintessentially middle class; Lionel Trilling, in the essay cited earlier, reminds us that indignation is a characteristic middle-class sentiment. And is it not indignation which figures as the dominant political sentiment of the day in this most middle-class of nations? Thus we have the scions of the haute bourgeoisie indulging the most delicious emotion at the expense of the petit bourgeoisie, and being repaid in kind. In periods of crisis, all these tendencies exacerbate, and between American piety and middle-class indignation, the stink of holiness has so infected our political discourse as to make that discourse unbearable.

THE ultimate problem in Keniston's book is that he is the captive of that very sensibility which we must distance and transcend if we are to try to understand the recent debacles of radicalism. Student activism, at least in its present form, seems to be dying. What will not vanish, however, and may in fact grow, is the moralizing upper-middle-class sensibility, which is the seedbed of the "radical" mentality. It is that class's political and cultural style which I believe to be the heart of the matter; to my mind, the radical youth ambience is no more than the reflection, though sometimes distorted, of the cognitive, moral, and affective qualities of that class. That class—let us face it, our class—has extraordinary strengths: intelligence, energy, effectiveness, sensitivity, and sometimes hypersensitivity, to the new and emergent. But we must learn to look as coolly as possible at its more problematic qualities: its political style, joining indignation with sentimentality; its middlebrow aesthetics, with all the limitations of vision and depth which that imposes; its oscillations between asceticism and self-indulgence; its love of highminded clichés; its propensity to guilt balanced against its inclination to moral self-satisfaction; its narcissistic investment in its children, along with its tendency to neglect them emotionally. We have had, here and there, some successful efforts to shed some light on the political and cultural dispositions of this stratum: David Bazelon's brilliant (and shamefully neglected) observations on the New Class; Edward Banfield's perceptive (but cranky and needlessly bitter) comments on the moralizing style; David Riesman's characteristically sharp insights scattered through his writings; penetrating but all too occasional remarks by Robert Nisbet. And we have also had, hidden away in the psychiatric and social-science literature, data and observation which, more often than not unknowingly, give us moments of astonishing illumination. But it is all, so far, scattered, incomplete, and embryonic. Unfortunately it will be a task of self-examination, that most difficult of the arts, for the intellectuals and social scientists who must accomplish it are themselves imprisoned by the assumptions of their class. If we judge by the obtuseness and self-satisfaction that has characterized much of the scholarship on the young radical, it may well be a task beyond us.

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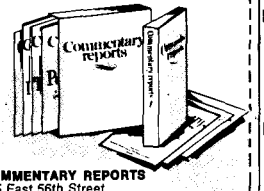

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Covenant

A Story

Kelly Cherry

I MET Felix—that's Seligman, I called him in our conversation—on the twenty-third of December, 1966. I remember the date because it was the date of my wedding. A blizzard had hit Virginia about ten in the morning, so when Felix walked into my parents' gold-papered hallway, he was splattered with snowflakes, lugging a suitcase with one hand and holding a wet gone-out cigar in the other. He's a big man, you know, but the girl he ushered in with him was smaller than I am. Abby wore a black dress. This disturbed me, though later I learned it ought not to have: black is not the color of mourning among Jews.

Felix was our best man. He'd been best friends with my husband since they were both ten years old in Flatbush. In 1966 Felix was one year into the business of getting a divorce from his wife, who, as Ezra explained it to me, had quit sleeping with him six months after they were married, because he'd given up his sales job in order to become a cameraman. He started out non-union, of course, and earned about fifty dollars a week. Now Felix makes in the neighborhood of fifty thousand a year, but now he screws around with heroin. Anyway, the marriage, his marriage, lasted for five years, and then his wife locked him out one night and he moved in with my husband for a while and then he met Abby. Abby is gone from the scene these days, too; I mean, neither Felix nor I see her, but by her choice. But she was pretty and dark and pretentious, and I liked her. My parents also liked her, and adored Felix on sight, and if they'd insisted beforehand that no unwed couple was going to stay overnight in one room in their lovely house that they'd worked all their lives for, as soon as they set eyes on this good-looking pair of people, they changed their minds, and whispered to me that it was okay. I should have been so attractive—the world would open up, don't kid yourself. Only Felix and his Abigail didn't stay, after all, because they could afford to be appalled at the prospect of being stranded in the suburbs of Richmond, Virginia.

If even I can't mistake the crossness that has crept into my tone of voice, it is because what I am trying to tell you is that so long ago, in that instant when Felix stepped into the house in Richmond, with Ezra grinning from ear to ear, so easily triumphant, with me in a state of panic, I knew I wanted to go to bed with him. *Knew* is maybe not quite the right word. I didn't acknowledge the notion, didn't dwell on it, but it was there, there in my body if not my brain, even as Ezra took him aside and handed him the thin white-gold band that would be urged onto my finger in a few hours. But you won't read this rightly if you don't recognize that both Ezra and I were well-taught children of the Age of Liberalism, prone to psychoanalysis, magnanimously tolerant of fantasy. Why not? Our fantasies were private and could not possibly wreak any effect on a world as incurious or unconcerned as we'd early enough concluded ours was. So the sensitivities of my own rather severe bosom could scarcely disturb my equilibrium, and when Felix flattered me or mocked me with a low drawl, it was only a game. Three years went by before I saw it'd sneaked up on reality. The night was cold, it was late February in New York, and after dinner—chicken breasts in a wine-and-mushroom sauce; how helplessly pleased I was with myself for having learned to cook at last—over coffee, my husband and Felix, each interrupting the other, broached me with the suggestion that I spend a week with Felix at his place in upstate New York. My husband said I needed a vacation. "It will be good for you," he said, "to get away from me for a while." My hands trembled. When I looked at Felix, he reached for the celery sticks: hungry and blithe, he was, seemed oblivious. But Ezra stiffened and I was afraid of the fast smile he challenged me with. He confused me. I didn't know whether to be insulted that I was so sexually harmless, or alarmed at my own ungovernability, or suspicious. My husband was so clever at uncovering guile in others that I assumed he was not incapable of a certain deviousness himself.

Two hours earlier, in the kitchen, as Felix was hanging up his coat, Ezra had caught me by the elbow. Because now that I write this, I remember it was not late February; it was Valentine's Day. That's marvelous. I suppose you had thought to discover in this letter some secret by which to

KELLY CHERRY, a new contributor, is a young writer whose work has appeared in a number of literary magazines.

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interpret me, content me, but now you see that I am no more than the contemporary female forced by circumstance to deny her inclination toward sentimentality. But you are arrogant and I do not love you. "Happy Valentine's," Ezra said. The present he gave me was a beautiful little Greek vase copy from the Metropolitan Museum; I have kept it still. But the card read, "Will you be mine?" And when you opened it up, it asked, "Or must I take you by force?" I kissed him for the vase. Then I asked him what the card meant: haltingly. He only laughed. "It seemed appropriate," he said. I quickly put them away before Felix returned. It was dinnertime.

We sat in the living room, lamplight reflecting from the snow mounded on the windowsills outside, the aroma of red wine running from the bowl of bones on the table. Felix stretched out in the armchair that had been my husband's before we were married. Was it too ostentatiously that I curled up on the couch next to Ezra and tried to hold his hand? But his face had gone black and he rose to fetch a story I'd done, a story in which the young husband painted his pregnant wife orange. The scene stemmed from Ezra, as so many of my story ideas were his. He showed the story to Felix. I occupied myself with cleaning up, clearing the dishes, while Felix read it, his giggles and snorts exaggerating Ezra's uncharacteristic silence, paining my ears. This story was set in his farmhouse in upstate New York; that had been Ezra's doing too.

"You don't really have the feel of it," Felix said. "You haven't been there often enough."

Three weeks later my husband was still at me, wanting me to go up there, and that was one reason I agreed to the separation when he instead suggested that. There were other reasons that played into it. Ezra, who'd been himself pretty much raised by his analyst, had been sending me to a psychiatrist at the Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, a fat and bearded dullard determined to abide by the rulebook to the point where we wasted fifteen minutes each session until I volunteered some stupid matter for discussion. "It's cold out," I said. He said, "Tell me why the cold makes you uncomfortable." But the weather was what we ought to have had in common. I was lonely, and he merely made me lonelier. So I said to Ezra, "Enough. If I'm sick, this is no way to get well."

He said nothing at first. He put a cigarette in his mouth, reached for my lighter; the flame swelled up like a volcano and a tremor ran up his arm and he dropped the lighter. I jumped for it, smothered the fire with my boot. "Goddamn you," he cried, "it's our one chance, don't you see that?" He'd cursed me before, but always we met in bed. I was crazy for his energy, which fed me, and this night was no different from the others. But in the morning, a letter came from my parents, addressed to us both, and he opened it first. It pointed out that if I worked a few months in Richmond, living with them, I could give Ezra the extra year he wanted in New York. "It'll give us time to think in," he said, "and they won't have to know the real reason behind the separation." Well, it fairly kills my soul to admit that the first thing I thought of was the midterm coming up in the night school Greek lit class I was taking; I wasn't prepared for it, and this would be a way out. That doesn't mean I wasn't terrified. "I'll go back to therapy," I said. "Anything." He called my parents and told them I was coming home that night. Then he called the airline and made a reservation, and called a taxi, and packed my things, and took me there, and sent me off. I swore and said he was an efficient bastard. But when we were picking up the ticket, a black woman with a child stood in line in front of us. "Thirty-two fifty," the clerk told her. "All I has got is thirty dollars," she said. She started to weep. Ezra dug the difference out of his pocket and put it on the counter and smiled at her. I was heartbroken.

I'd come home from an interview at Midlothian High School, where the principal queried me on my opinion of *Catcher in the Rye* and asked how long my husband, doing his doctorate "up there," wore his hair. My own, I'd cut short for the sake of this interview. I knew Ezra wouldn't've approved, but in the Southern sunshine I was living in, all life seemed simpler and earthier, more practical, than he would have it. Now I went into my room, put my purse down on the ingenious, long desk my father had built so willingly across one wall, and the telephone rang. It was Ezra. "I've been thinking," he said. "This is my plan. Come back to New York, find a job, take an apartment of your own, undergo intensive, long-term therapy. I'll work part-time and pay our bills. If you can become financially and emotionally independent of me, a self-sufficient adult, then it is possible that at some later time we may try living together again." He must have memorized it, and the self-righteousness and the vanity of it stung me to the quick. "No! No! No!" I screamed. My voice flew out of me as if it had been caged. "Oh, God, no."

"Then you want a divorce," he said, still matter-of-fact.

"Oh, God, no," I screamed again, but I could hardly believe that it was I whose shrillness filled the room. I cried and pleaded and he hung up. I laid my head down on the desk next to my purse.

My parents are musicians; my mother's hands are rough, the fingertips callused, but her bones have a graceful precision, a long, fine line I still would like to have learned. Gently she knocked on the door. "I think," she said, "you'd better tell

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us what's wrong, now." What Southern delicacy! . . . Insisting I should assume the subordinate position I wanted. What outrage followed, when they learned what was going on. But I would not listen to them. I called Ezra back and told him that I submitted to his plan. "It's too late," he said. "You don't really care about me." Nor did all my tears avail.

Then I wrote to his analyst, a careful, honest letter that he never acknowledged. I called my own analyst, who said, "If that's the way the man feels about you, I can't change his mind." I called Ezra's brother and sister-in-law. They had been my closest friends in New York: "We don't want to mix in," they said. "Our only part in all this is to offer moral support to Ezra." I called Abby. "Men," she said, "they're all nuts." But Abby never called me.

The sole person from that hub of the world who was troubled to get in touch with me was Felix, and he, in his monosyllabic manner, with that hip shrug I could see long-distance, assured me that I was not, indeed, "no 'count"—the mockery was discreet—nor was I so uselessly deluded as Ezra had said or so bothersome as I feared. He wrote me a letter which I saved, since it took off from divorce in general and sailed into a description of his current summertime *ménage à trois* in Woodstock and concluded with a dream sequence wherein he seduced some gaunt lady roundheels from Larchmont, an attorney's wife, mounting all his loathings and his fears on her apocalyptically avocado-carpeted floor. I welcomed that letter for its friendliness, and resented it too, because it confined me so closely to the arena of simple friendship. We talked a few times on the telephone. He was in favor of my returning to New York. But that was all. And I accepted the indignity of his disinterest, for if I was guilty of adultery, that sin was not only not palpable, a slight waywardness of the imagination, but had been committed not with him but with the composer in Russia whom I'd once promised to marry. I'd broken that promise in order to marry my husband. Then perhaps the adultery was done with my husband in violence upon the pledge, even upon the very outlandishness of the pledge, I'd contracted in a cemetery in Riga to my brilliant and sentimental Russian, who, sick with music and hope, loved me more truly than I felt free at the time to give him credit for, disbelieving his intent because I knew I wasn't worth it. In this way one succeeds in wondering whether Ezra hadn't failed to trust me out of his mistrust of himself, but I can recognize a rationalization when I see one; and surely that kind of melancholic twisting and turning is so far from being true that it was instead the locus of the sickness my husband, probing my psyche even more assiduously than the recesses of my body, stirred in me. In any case, I saw Felix just once right after I returned to New York. Oh, he was hugely altered. His hair was shaggy and unruly, he'd lost thirty pounds, he was dropping acid, he was filming subtle and arch little obscenities for distribution by *Evergreen,* and if he was in bad shape, I was in worse, and we met at the Esquire on Broadway for breakfast and went our separate ways.

Sickness: I am and have always been at the core dogmatic as hell and pitted against the rest of the world but baffled by how ever to make that definition visible, much less viable. You said I am not a woman. You should be able to do better than that. If the accusation is true, it holds for every one of us, including your wife, and if it is true, it is also tired, a ploy, and a threat. "Look here," this man tells me; "you're not a woman until I acknowledge you as one." You can take your sanctions, sweetheart, and shove them. I don't need them. Nor will I allow you to equate my existence with a generality, I am not the womb but only contain one, and my problems are particular and only resemble those of my sisters. Let me tell you something. I went underground quite consciously when I was seven or so; it seemed the only way to preserve one's sanity in a family which was utterlv charming, bright, and dedicated to doom. My husband, Ezra Solomon—his father was a small-time judge riddled with ambition—tried to tutor me into an anger with them that should have freed me, but, you see, they are *likeable.* Just as he was. And what none of them—he because he believed in "love"—would understand or even accept was really me, is that I simply did not feel the need for any radical reconstruction of our mortal souls. I still don't for the life of me understand why people should not be permitted to feel hatred and sexual desire and ambition and envy and guilt and sentimentality and any other thing they care to feel, since what is conveyed is all that has any effect, or maybe here what I do mean is affect.

I believe in manners. In appearances. In superficiality, if you will.

But this passion is off the point and incoherent to boot. What I started to say, to tell you, is that I am depressed when I see myself aging, and whether I look fifteen or not is beside the point because I know where the wrinkles are and I know where my limbs are losing elasticity and I know how the chances for childbearing daily decrease: when I see myself aging and yet retaining some undefeatable, some so help me almost unavoidable, childlike incapacity to translate what I know into how I reason. How easy it would be if I were only faced with translating what I think into what I do, but the problem is deeper, and shows even in a certain translucence of the eye, which I spotted in my mother ages ago and answer to now in the mirror, a certain

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openness which reveals not, haplessly, vacuity, but an incredibly crazy knack for tolerating anomaly after anomaly, if that's the word I want, for sustaining contradictions without end. And in fact if I do have any talent at all it is reducible to this, that I can assume any number of personalities on paper, which has been my means of survival, and is also the deathtrap in which that core of dogmatism, me at age seven hearing God in my head telling me to put aside all argument and go about my work, which was prophecy (I never told *that* to my bearded friend; it's too simple to analyze away), has locked itself. Don't you dare choke on this. You asked for my letter. "I am waiting," you said.

FELIX and I talked on the phone occasionally during the year. After October, it was always I who called: October was when he informed me that my husband had flown to Mexico, compliments of his brother's money, and obtained a divorce from me. I was divorced for a week before I knew it. Felix tried to placate me, saying, "What good is living with someone who doesn't love you? You're better off out of it. Come on, luv," he said, and giggled, "be a big girl and roll with the punches." But I went on bawling and he said he was sorry. Then after a while, along about March, when Ezra married again, I stopped calling Felix, and it wasn't until almost summer that he rang to say he'd seen my husband who was full of crap and how was my love life. I was surprised. But not entirely. I had, after all, mailed him a poem I'd done about him, which I hoped would set up some echoes in his head. It did, though I knew muse-baiting was an inferior sport. He suggested that we get together sometime. Oh, dear Jesus, was I nonchalant. "Sure," I said, as a year of lukewarm affairs had taught me to hold my tongue in these matters. But that, you see, didn't stop me from glancing at the telephone every time I walked past it.

Then the following week he did phone, and he was in town, and again I met him for breakfast—this was June, and the Esquire had gone out of business and we met at Stark's on 90th—and we went back to my place and turned on with some stuff I had stashed there and then drove to Riverside Park and 96th, where a five-year-old boy black as the Queen of Spades was peeing over the railing. I was too high to concentrate on more than one thing at a time, so whenever I pulled myself back from watching the remnants of cloud that skirted the sun, I found my hemline inching up. Felix climbed a tree. We went somewhere for lunch. I forget where. On the way we passed a young girl selling hotdogs on the street; she was sitting on a stool, and Felix, with the privileges that he was entitled to as a bright and beautiful male making it in Fun City, bent over and patted her knee, but I just smiled at her right alongside him. In the restaurant he said, "Come to the country for a couple of days." He added, "After Bonny leaves." I asked him who Bonny was. "She's been living there," he said, "and she has this kid I'm crazy about. You should have had a kid."

"Are you living with her?" Because one never knew for sure.

"Goddamn! Living? Living with her? I call living with someone when you live with someone for a few years and have a goddamn kid by someone."

He was shaking his head as if he'd like to shatter the air around him, and the motive for his fury escaped me. "What happened between you and Ezra?" I asked.

"Nothing," he said.

But he was deeply hurt because my husband refused to countenance his interest in yoga and the *I Ching*, my husband the arch-rationalist, direct descendant of Elijah Gaon of Vilna who never slept and burned the bad books of the Hasidim, and he felt that my husband was throwing away twenty-some years of friendship. "Christ," Felix said, "friends are for arguing with, aren't they?" Tentatively, I nodded my head, but he wasn't looking at me. "I love him," he said, "and that doesn't seem to mean anything." I would have liked to ask him about Ezra's second wife, but was afraid to. I figured, you see, that he'd just been divorced from my husband and was getting back at him by going to bed with me, but loathed myself for thinking this because it is the kind of deviousness built on self-contempt that I am afraid healthy people don't operate on.

As a matter of fact, when I was seventeen and at New Mexico Tech, a misfit if ever there was one, my closest friend was an older man named Will who said to me that he thought I might someday be the single real woman he knew of if I could rid myself of my deviousness. That is the kind of thing I always took to heart, took to bed, and brooded over. Will later gave up mathematics, it was topology or something, for bear-hunting in Alaska. So I tried to lay psychology aside and came on very friendly but calm and Felix was stunned when back at my apartment I seduced him.

It was that, because, like any man, his view of relationships resists expansion, and if I was his surrogate, I was still his ex-best-friend's ex-wife. He knew only what he wanted to do, not what he was willing to do. But for God's sake, accept this much about me: *I* knew that it was too late to wound Ezra by sleeping with Felix. Both Felix and I, in our different ways, had early on transgressed the things that Ezra only toyed with, and we hankered after some conventionality which seemed forever just beyond our reach. Felix sat in my line of sight, across from me, at the desk, licking the edge of a reefer he was rolling, and he has a small wart tucked into the side of his

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nose that is unaccountably attractive. "What I do like about you," I told him, "is the way you move. It's masculine."

He was as flattered as the most innocent of savages. And why shouldn't he have been? It was sincere enough. He giggled. "I always thought my best qualities were really kind of feminine," he said. "Effeminate."

"Oh, they are."

I sat on the bed. "Why not bring that thing over here," I said, and if I wasn't elegant, at least I wasn't coy. So we sat together on the bed, smoking another cigarette, and the speckles of dust that swam in the sunlight washing over us from my windows grew as enormous as planets. "It's the Milky Way," I laughed, because I was in the one place where the shadow of my mother's smartness couldn't reach me. I was in the one place where no man's wit or coldness could tyrannize me: it's been years since I broke the first taboo, and since then no man can put out my fire. The heat of my body is sufficient to support the cosmos, yes, damn you, to generate stars and suns. I might have spoken aloud, "Try it, Felix, try to pin me down here, try to swing your weight over me and beat me down here, the way you do with your shrugs and your girls and your dope. The way Ezra did with words." He would not even have heard me. He was lost in space already. First I kneaded his thighs, slowly, slowly, and then I sucked the skin of his shoulders, making moons, and touched my tongue to his small teeth, and I revolved around him like earth's solitary moon, slowly, gazing on his blue, glassy eyes until they closed.

He was good, the best I'd ever had, and when we'd done, he kissed my throat, and said, "Well, it was worth waiting for." Such gentleness took me off my guard. I stroked his face. All my energy was spent, and oh lord, oh lord, I knew for how little. I wanted to take it all back, gather it up in my hands, put it to some intelligent, real use. But it was useless, and always was; my energy derives from a stingy source which will not allow a long-term investment. These metaphors were a misery to me, and I turned away from Felix, but not before he caught the cloudiness on my face, so that he held me in his arms for a moment. Then, "I have to be going," he said.

"Right on," I said.

He hugged me.

I had cut a religion class I was supposed to be sitting in on, a doctor appointment, and that was also the first day since I started tutoring her that I begged off on a session with Valerie. She's got cerebral palsy—well, you know—a radiant face, dark brown hair blown around her face like the emblem of our era, and I was wrong to skip our session because she has been to me no less than what the child on the farm was to Felix. When Felix repeated that he wanted me to come up to the farm, then, still full of his hug, I soared. Even when he explained that it had to be worked in between when Bonny, the current girl, was taking off for Mexico, and the following weekend, which was the Fourth of July and he was going to Woodstock to drop an anniversary tab with the girl of last summer, or girls, I said you bet and was tickled to death at being listed in the stable of a hopelessly inarticulate but perfectly fine moviemaker. He did a film of the subway strike so lyrical, so lovely, it would break your heart to see it. I showed him out the door and stood in the doorway and he touched my cheek. His fingers were as swift as rain.

THURSDAY. A week has gone by since I began this, and I still don't know what you hope to gain by it. Or I do—you in your unoffensively assertive suit, laced shoes, peeking through this keyhole into the drug culture, I detest your compartmentalizing, long to do the same. "Tell me," you said, "why you feel guilty about being unhappy." That was the most splendid excuse I had ever heard: I wanted to pick it up and raise it like an umbrella over our heads and with the rain pitching down on all sides I'd let you kiss my hands and face at least until the sun shone again. Well, as my father used to say, we'll see. Three minor incidents keep urging themselves onto this paper, and you may as well have them too.

The first is that a few days ago I received a note from Dan Atkinson, a writer whom I knew rather formally in Greensboro. He's thirty-one, married, has two little boys, and from what I gather off the grapevine, conducts his life with a bit more honor than most of us who were there at the time. I thought him a good writer; and he's the only one of the bunch who has had less success than I. To his note he added a postscript: "I keep on sending stories out, but each time they sit on them just long enough for my hairline to recede another one-sixteenth of an inch, and then they send them back without any comment."

It's a struggle for power. When we were in Greensboro, I wrote a story, still unpublished, titled "Portraits." The hero was Jakob, a Dutch painter of ambiguous aims. I'd always pictured my Jakob with blond spun-out hair, a pool of hazy sunshine. One night in Brooklyn, my husband, who is as dark and mole-pocked as any Mediterranean nomad, showed me that nowhere in the story did I indeed specify the color of Jakob's hair. Ezra was smiling when he pointed this out to me, but it was not a malicious smile, or at least I didn't think it was, but it was one which delighted in recognizing something I hadn't, and sometimes still, on the subway or in the store, I think I see his thick lips pulled down like a drapery of flesh over an unspeakably vast and *verboten* abyss. He loved to link things which I would otherwise see as disparate, until it

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seemed he was weaving a web around my mind, and it was hopeless to argue or struggle against it.

The third thing is not unrelated, though it has to do with Jamaica. Of course I thought about you in Jamaica, in August, but I had an affair there, with the twenty-one-year-old Hindu who managed the hotel in-bond store. His name was Johnny, and except that he had no chin, he was the image of my husband. But the only reading matter in his apartment was a paperback titled *Married Men Make the Best Lovers,* and a stack of comic books, and he knew almost nothing about sex and approached the subject with a scientific mien that was ofttimes unnerving. But he was a nice youth, and he bore me no grudge, and I loved the excellence with which he ran his shop. We stretched out on the sand of the public beach, crossing our legs over each other, listening to the static on his transistor radio. John Crow zeroed in close over our heads, and our heads were buzzing from the ganja. I burrowed my fingers in the sand while he explained to me that the necklace he wore was given to him by his widowed mother in Kingston: it bore the image of a guru and kept the bad spirits away. He carried me back to the hotel on his scooter about one, and when I got into the room I switched on the lamp between Valerie's mother's bed and mine, because I thought I might do some reading. She sensed the light was on and reached up to turn it off, but she was full of sleeping pills, and when she reached up, her pillow slid off, and then she began to slide out from bed after the pillow. She fell asleep again in the middle of all this action, and there she hung, suspended between the bed and the floor, between, I vow, time and space. So I went over and picked her up and swung her back onto the bed. I tucked her in and then started to slip the pillow under her. Suddenly she raised both her arms, her wrists making little clasping motions, and her face was so white and expressionless that *in an instant* my position was transformed, and I was guilty, I was responsible, I was that damned survivor the corpse clutches at in the hour of silence. What dreams we have. When I was nine and not yet brainwashed by civilization, I dreamed of an ancient wooden house. The outside staircase climbed to the attic. I stood at the foot of the stairs, grasping the banister, and as I stood there, I saw my family in their various stations along the staircase shed their skin in flakes like flakes of snow, until to my huge, crying sorrow their bones showed and shimmered, turning in the pale, courteous light of the stars as if they were semiprecious stones.

Here is why I tutor Valerie: I make her laugh, my innocence, as she is pleased to call it, amuses her. Here is why I do not understand the books you patronize me with, Kierkegaard and Saint Augustine and the rest. All arguments convince only a believer. To the nonbeliever, the universe is discrete, insane, purposelessly proliferous, vain and futile. Say that last word with a long *i*. Every burst of flower, shock of aroma, every high mass sung or thought conceived or love survived, is made irredeemably ugly, is made disgusting, by the death of a child, and every death is the death of a child. There is no *time* in the world alone. There is no trust, because nothing is trustworthy, nor is there any sharing. Pessimism is the only intelligent response to fact; and the only fact is the fact of evil. But what I'm trying to say is that if you ask me to define God in twenty-five words or less, I'm game, and I say that what God is, is the possibility of goodness. The possibility. But it is alas the perception of that possibility which without reflection commands us, binds us in covenant, wrenches us from our natural posture, and sucks up our energy in an unending effort to bring into being what can never endure until the End of Days, or if you will the Day of Judgment, and that is what *profound* is, for without personality there is no morality. Somewhere God and Eros meet. (But it is not in Dr. Freud's room. I was there and I can vouch for that.) In return for our unholy anguish we receive hope, history, and once in a blue moon, communication, but this tension, this covenant, is the bleeding hardest bargain anybody ever drove; selling your soul to the devil and being sued for gypping him is easy by comparison, and sometimes I just really wish to hell that somebody would bother to say this without whitewashing it into terms of conviction or faith or whatever. What it is, is revelation, and having consented to recognize the revelation, there is no answer open to you but *yes*. Maturity? Maturity is for people who don't have the good goddamn sense to tremble with terror every blessed moment of their existence, who don't recognize the enormity of the debt of gratitude we owe to God.

So I went upstate, and Felix met me at the bus stop in Hudson, which is not far from Tanglewood.

Too bad for me, he'd got things ordered in his head before I got up there, and as soon as I stepped off the bus he cut me down by asking what I was doing wearing city clothes. We picked up his laundry and when we got to the farmhouse I changed into my jeans and a T-shirt and work shoes. He was wearing wonderfully filthy white pants and the new moustache that made him look down and out in Paris and London. The first thing we did of course was light up and go for a walk in the meadow. "You have to watch out for the gopher holes," he warned me, "you could break a leg."

The sun was bright, the grass was green all over, that gorgeous air sinks in deep. I was glad to see Happy Jack Dog again, and said so. "Son of a bitch killed a gopher last week and brought it in by its neck. Don't want nobody to call him

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Happy any more," said Felix. I tripped. "I told you, you got to watch out for four-legged dangerous dogs."

"You don't know what you're saying," I said.

"Sure I do."

"You said you could break a leg in one of these holes. They're mouseholes," I said, "holes in the earth. I'm up on holes because I'm doing 'Notes from Underground' with Valerie."

"I have this feeling, well, I do, that she must be beautiful," he said.

"She's sixteen."

"I read Dostoevsky once. But I wasn't sixteen, I was younger yet. My mother thought she'd improve my mind by checking out books from the Brooklyn Public Library."

"I never realized you had a mother."

"I'm a *son* of a bitch."

I said, "It's true you're much too tough for me."

We took off our shoes. The pressure of the sun pushed our feet to the earth. Happy Jack Dog nuzzled my feet. "Scram," Felix said, and Happy Jack ran for the woods.

"You're a mean one," I told him, when I tried to kiss him and he pushed me away.

"People drive by, even on this dirt road. You got to watch out for people."

"I know, I know. They're two-legged dangerous dogs."

"If you call him Happy again, I'll strangle you. I used to love him, and that's what you don't understand." He put his big hands on my neck and we walked back to the house. . . .Which is beautiful.

It's fifty bucks a month and he did the insulation himself. A fireplace, a potbellied stove, a darkroom and an upstairs, and the entirety so fragile you feel like you're living on the ground and the whole thing so sturdy you can stay there the year through. Hell, yes, I was there a year. Maybe it was the weed, but I like grass: it is usually fun and it is sensuous and the ritual in its use is peace-making for the mind, even when you are alone. I grant you, I never heard of anybody's getting a good idea on it; but you do sometimes stumble onto interesting notions if you're smoking with someone, because the way conversation works when you're high is that statement A is satisfactorily coherent, statement B is coherent, but B picks up one word or image from A and replies to that, not to the sense of the sentence as a whole. It's like shooting at ducks tangentially.

But Felix and I didn't talk much. Everything we might have said to each other would have rung in a third party, Ezra's ghost. So he loaded his rifle and went out again, this time to take a couple of potshots at rabbits, and the blasts shook me as I rocked in the rocking chair in the living room. There are different kinds of long weekends, and I knew by now that this one was going to be longer than most. My grandmother would have said, "Trouble always comes in three's." My mother says, "When trouble comes, it comes in spades." As soon as I'd entered the house that morning, I saw the book on Cézanne, and knew by the tear on the slipcover that it was my ex-husband's. Felix had left it on the coffee table. He must have known, I think, or ought to have known, that I would recognize it; he knew the slipcover was torn when I hurled the book at Ezra the day he sneered and said my taste in art was "literary." I retorted: "It's not me who's doing a hubristic paper on lithos of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, of all things." Our battles were very intellectual and straight. But I at least knew that for, or in, all his puffed-up rationalism, he saw himself less as King Solomon and more as the handsome and clever Joseph, Mann's lovable unlicked cub, purely oblivious to fleshly lures which would evilly sway him from his righteous administration. *I* knew that when Potiphar's wife, who would be running to a shameful fullness, but harsh with herself, not promiscuous, not oversure, but frightened and bored, said, "Dear young boy, I am sick with the weariness in my womb and desire to teach you the pleasures that are already beginning to graduate from me," Joseph answered without mercy: "What have I to learn from you?" He would not risk Potiphar's sword; neither would he leave Potiphar's house in peace. And with his soft looks and scowl, his curls that whispered when they brushed against her sleeve in the dusk, he drove that woman into madness.

I turned my mind inside out for him, combing all the crumbs of ambivalence from my imagination. When I was clean, he walked away.

THE SCREENDOOR slammed on Felix's entrance. He had with him some stuff from the pot plants he cultivates in between the cucumbers. He'd dried out the tops of some of the plants the day before, and that stuff especially was strong. We smoked it and started to mess around and then he sort of maneuvered me outside into the bushes next to the garage. I didn't altogether comprehend the reason for his grin, since I'd gladly screw in the sunshine any day of the week, but I was afraid to say anything. I could smell his body and it was like the ground. He'd brought the rifle with him and set it down by the inflated plastic mattress we lay on. He knew his way around the country, all right, the route was mapped. We stripped, not touching each other, and the sun sparkled on the hairs of his legs. For the first time, I paid attention to the freckles on his chest; they wiped me out. I wanted to say something nice to him, then, because he was so defenseless against the sky, rooted there like a sapling, bending over me as if compelled to by the wind, but the sun kept shifting, striking first here and then there, so that I was at a loss, I was losing ground. The sun burned up

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my insides; he stoked away at me as if I were a furnace. His mouth was a glowing coal, I could scarcely catch my breath. The sun beat on the backs of my thighs, and the world kept turning over and over, and then I came, and couldn't stop coming, and for what seemed like forever I had everything I'd ever wanted, because I forgot myself, forgot who I was, forgot him, and was ready to die.

As though it were a rose, he plucked from the nearest bush a straw hat with a short brim and set it on the back of his head. "Oh," I said, "that looks wonderful."

"It belongs to Ezra's wife," he said.

I looked at him in terror. Then I opened his fist and put my mouth to his palm.

"It's too bad, isn't it," he said, "that it doesn't mean anything."

Supper was foul: soup made of radishes, beets, tomatoes, cucumbers, okra, I think, and a salad of unadorned lettuce leaves. I suppose had a girl tried to get me to eat that I'd have laughed at her and fixed myself a hamburger, which means Women's Lib still has some work to do on me, but on the other hand, who needs a hassle. You should have tasted the bread he'd baked, the boy's not going to put Sara Lee out of business. I swallowed what I could, wishing I dared to assert myself, lay claim to the kitchen and bake a blueberry cake. But to my left hung the pegboard Abby had contributed, and the flowers on the table were from the border she'd seeded when Felix first bought the place; or they may have been Bonny's flowers. So I kept myself to myself, and afterward, in the living room, I waited in a corner while he taped himself on a dobro, drums, and the harmonica. He majored in composition at New York University, and he knows rhythm, but somewhere along the line he has lost track of what music was meant to be, or maybe he is shy of it these days, and he pounded on those instruments until the echoes in my head mightily ripped it apart. But that is *not* right, I am being much too crude here. He was hunched over the bongos, the cymbals, the dobro, balling himself into one long roll of sound, and if I felt he'd banished me from the scene, it was my own fault, because he handed me a brass flute, and said, Pan tempting Midas to profane Apollo's godly playing, "Hey, chicken, goof on this with me." I was afraid. I was always afraid. Eventually we went upstairs to sleep.

THE SILENCE of the country oppressed me.

In the morning, Felix wanted to find a Sears store, so we got into the car and toked up and started off. We weren't thinking too clearly and soon discovered we were headed toward Albany. It seemed to make sense to continue toward the destination we had evidently begun with.

Somewhere on this side of it, a policeman stopped us, a young cop, skinny and hesitant. We must have looked freaky by that time, all right, anybody who could read the signs could tell we were bombed: I was wearing sunglasses and Felix's fatigue jacket, and there was a tin of about a dozen reefers in the jacket, and Felix's light brown hair curled out uncombed, and the stubble on his face gleamed with sweat. Felix got out of the car. The kid cop said, "May I see your license, please?"

Felix pulled it out of his pocket.

"I see," the kid said. "And where do you live, Felix?"

Felix told him.

Then Felix asked if we'd done anything wrong.

"Oh, no, no. But we're expecting a shipment of two pounds of hash soon, you see, somewhere in the vicinity. Ever use hash, Felix?"

"Well, I'll tell you the truth," Felix said, "now and then, but only by way of experiment."

"That so?"

"That's so. . . .Now I admit we may have toked up for our journey, just a little grass, but wouldn't you?"

The kid snorted.

Felix said, "God knows it's a long trip to anywhere."

"Just a little pot?"

"That's so, to be sure," Felix said.

I held my breath as the policeman approached me, but he only said, "Excuse me, ma'am," and searched the glove compartment in a perfunctory way. "Well," he spoke again, turning back to Felix, "you know how it is. We don't want any strong stuff coming in here, do we?"

"I should say not, to be sure." I was going to murder him if he said "to be sure" one more time.

The kid smiled, then, and handed the license back to Felix. "Have a good trip, now," he said, and beamed when Felix, cool Felix, gave him the victory sign.

WE WERE approaching Albany. "This reminds me," he said to me, "of a trip I took with Ezra when we were seventeen." I knew the story already, but I didn't forestall him. "Would you believe we drove way the hell up here from Brooklyn, looking for whores to lose our virginity with?" In Ezra's mind, that search had assumed the parodic proportions of a 19th-century *Brautshau*. They'd piled into the judge's car on a rainy night, flushed with success before it was theirs, and when they got to Albany, they'd combed every back alley the town had to offer. "We didn't find any, of course; drove home as lily-white as when we left." But Ezra thought that night was full of laughs, and reminisced about it often, or used to, because distance allowed him to treasure so rare a lapse into spontaneity which was not serious. "It made us blood brothers. My brother, Ezra," Felix said. "I'll bet he doesn't even remember how it was. How else could he do this to me?"

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"Do what?"

"I told him he was acting the same way his old man acted, tyrannical. I thought he'd understand that kind of language. Psychological."

"So? His second marriage won't last, you know," I said, shaking.

"What do you know about it? Do you know Susan Alexander? Hell, no, you don't know about her. You're talking through your hat," he raged. "She's a real fine woman."

"I know he didn't take any time after me to find out anything about himself." It was a shot in the dark, but I had to defend myself.

"Oh, to be sure," he mumbled. But when some time had passed, he said, "That mother was always blessed: even with his name; he could always cut the child in half and still have both halves. May he rot in hell."

And that floored me. I'd always thought that if there was envy in their relationship, it must have been Ezra's envy for this laconic, shuffling, successful man whose hands were so competent and flexible, who sat beside me, puffing away at a thin stick, the heavy smoke enshrouding my heavy head. I smirked. "Such an expenditure of energy, Felix; that's not like you."

He laughed. "No, it's not. But it's pretty funny, isn't it, that after all these years I should come again to Albany, and with his ex-wife, at that?"

"Hilarious."

"Well, you wouldn't understand. I've noticed one thing about you," he said. "You get expectations about things. And when things don't live up to your expectations, you feel cheated."

He was right on target. There wasn't much I could say, except, maybe, "No foolin'," milking the South for all it was worth.

"Yeah, luv," he said. "No fooling."

We were in Albany, and we bought some peanuts and then asked directions to Sears and I went with him. The garden shop was a broad expanse of concrete wrinkled with potted plants and plastic swimming pools. Everywhere we walked, we passed these pools, brimming with stale water, and pretty soon we started running by them, weaving in and out around the plastic, which was red and blue and yellow, skidding, splashing our hands in the water, sprinkling the concrete with the water, until some clerk stopped us short, but deferentially. Straight people never know, not even you would know, and Felix came on grave as a churchman, and the clerk led him away to the tool department. I found my way back out to the car and let myself in and started to cry. I was crying because I was thinking about how Ezra had divorced me, and I was thinking about the divorce because of Felix, because the book, and the hat, and the blanket that had been a wedding present from my Aunt May, that I'd seen sitting on a shelf in the open closet in Felix's bedroom, told me, no matter whether it was what Felix wanted me to hear or not, that my husband and his real, fine wife, Susan Alexander, had been living in the farmhouse as early as late last summer, all the time I kept hoping, not without encouragement from him, that he'd come to his senses and see what he was throwing away, me, and I was a fool. When Felix came back to the car, he'd charged about two hundred dollars worth of power equipment, everything he'd "always wanted," he said, "since I was a boy in Flatbush." I was still crying, but I had on my sunglasses, and anyway, he was too worked up over his drills and saws to notice. "Hey, Felix," I said, "give me a kiss before we start."

His eyes flashed, blue eyes, and he roared at me the way Ezra used to: "Goddamn!" he cried. "Goddamn! Sometimes . . . some*times* you really embarrass me," he said, "sometimes you just about put me too uptight to take."

I shivered and clutched at his coat; pulled it closer to my chest.

But I was too hurt not to fight back. I said, "It's only a kiss. It doesn't mean anything, and if it doesn't mean anything, why should you mind?" I struck my knee with my fist. "You lie, Felix, you lie. You're as loyal as Happy Jack, and you're bruised all over, or else you wouldn't work so hard at keeping your distance."

"Sometimes," he said, "I think you're crazy. Ezra said you were sick. Oh, dear lord," he moaned, "don't you see, baby, don't you see everyone walks around with his little bag of shit on his back, and you can't just walk up to them, without any goddamn preamble, walk up to them without even introducing yourself, like you were God or somebody, and take away what's theirs? My load is mine."

It was drizzling, a cold, stupid rain. We drove in silence. When we were beyond the city limits, I tapped him on the shoulder. He turned toward me and I gave him the victory sign he'd given to our kid cop. He giggled. "To be sure," he said.

We were still a far cry from home. I sat on my end of the seat. I was remembering the wedding blanket. Remembering how my husband and I used to lie under it back-to-back, with him reading Saul Bellow and me reading Thomas Hardy and each of us interrupting the other to quote nice sentences. We'd have to turn the temperature down—the blanket was electric—when we made love and then had to turn it up again because he was always as cold as I was. His black hair, wired in an Afro, spiraled above me like some wild flower sprung from hell, an orchid accidental, improbable, violent, intended for the tropics; when we made love, he held himself apart from me, the veins of his arms swollen and thick, gorged, and if I cried out, he never did. But afterward he'd shiver, he was cold, and he was afraid to go to sleep unless I left the light on for him. Oh, yes, I knew he suffered, and I will not have you say he didn't, or

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that I didn't know it, because if I renounce that knowledge, I am no better, no more sensitive, than he is, and I must, I *shall,* be better. But I was stoned. I said to Felix, "Am I better than your other girls?" Which was a silly mistake, the kind of thing I should have learned not to do long ago. He laughed. "You're all of you different," he said, "so how can I compare?"

"You're such a sweetheart," I said, and was surprised at how truly tough it sounded.

"Ah, but the loveliest girl of all is Mary Jane."

Dusk had fallen; had dropped over the dirt road we now entered, the fields, the Berkshires behind us, the garage.

I was depressed. "Felix," I began, "I'm riding a bummer."

"Do you want to talk to me about it?"

He was sitting at the kitchen table, puffing away at a pipe, and at once the way he switched, from cigar to cigarette to pipe, lacking any discrimination, bugged me terribly, and I said, "No."

"Then why did you have to tell me about it in the first place?"

That was only too fair, so I went into the living room and put an old Jefferson Airplane on the stereo and smoked some hash. He had a sewing basket on the bookcase; there was grass in it, and hash, and roaches, and pills, which I have never gotten in to, and a couple of hundred caps, and envelopes of the white horse that he said was pleasant to pet and fondle. The only thing he wasn't doing was mainlining, and maybe he was doing that. "You've got quite a stash here," I called. There was no answer from the kitchen. He was reading the *I Ching,* reading with such utter earnestness that I felt sorry for him. I knew the book: *Decay augurs sublime success and the advantage of crossing the great river. What has happened once will surely happen again. . . . When darkness falls, the Superior Man goes within and rests peacefully.* There was a mattress on the floor of the living room, which I sat on, and when the record was over, I played the flip side. Felix came in.

"Want to see some films?" he asked, shortly.

"New ones?"

"From last winter."

He set about putting up the projection equipment—he had equipment for this and that, for everything—and I kept to my place on the mattress. And then out of the blue he crossed the room and bent over me and kissed me on my ear, a friendly kiss, a light kiss, an uncomplicated kiss, and looked into my eyes and danced away back to the other end of the room, astonishing us both; and in the hush that ensued, I heard the Jefferson Airplane flying high, out of sight, winging at full volume that insufferable, that brilliant, driving, last stanza to "White Rabbit," which is Alice's song:

And the white knight is talking backwards.
And the Red Queen's all in her head. . . .
Remember what the Dormouse said:
Keep your head!
Keep your head!

I forced myself to focus: it was fifteen minutes of filmed water he showed: spring water, sea water, rain water, winter water. Ice floes split and crashed and crumbled; at the shoreline, crystals of ice reflected each other like a hall of mirrors. The sun on the screen sugared the snow, and I felt the chill settling on my legs going numb. In the final shot, snowflakes fell, and I fell with them, falling, falling past the projector's light that grazed Felix's face, falling past Felix, spinning, hurtling through space, far past the sun's edge, far out to the outer reaches of the mind's eye, where I can see still before me my darkling father at his polished red-gold violin. When he turns to me, there are tears looped along his lashes, and the tendons of his hands blacken in pain. He needs me, he is calling to me, and I *will* hasten to him. I run, I ran, toward him, and from his mouth there gusted over me a river of lava, and the current of that so brutal heat blasted me back and forth among all the various worlds, ringed and unringed. How I detested my father then, hated him, as he gathered the space around him like leaves of manuscript inadvertently let loose, shutting away his sorrow, confounding me, and abandoned me to this other, deadly, cold, cold void. Oh, yes! Oh, yes! I did cry for myself, and cry for myself today, and I *am not* ashamed, beloved, because this I knew in the beginning: that if I fail to do the very thing on my own behalf, there exists no one else who can.

I LEFT Felix and went upstairs to sleep. I was cold. I went to the closet and removed the quilt that lay atop the wedding blanket, thinking, He won't know whether I recognized the blanket and did not care, or did not recognize it at all; he won't know whether he succeeded. But I was still cold, so I wound myself in the sheets and the quilt and went to sleep with my sweaters on. After a while, he came up too, and I woke up and listened to him shed his clothes. He peeled the quilt and the sheets from my back, and I heaved upward in spite of myself, loathing my flesh for its willfulness, its tyranny; his flesh slicing into mine was wounding me, and when mine closed over his, sealing it in like a throbbing sore, I was feverish. I pitched over, and he was moving in and out, beating on me, inflaming me, the skin of his chest igniting me like a flint, balls of wool from my sweaters sticking like ash to his chest and armpits. I ran my fingers down his spine over the small of his back. His waist was as defined as a girl's, the fullness of his buns angered me. "Oh, Jesus," he said, "I like to ball." He said, "Anything. Man, woman, beast." I dug my nails in. He laughed. "That's

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the spirit," he said. Sweat dropped from his forehead onto my face and rained on my clouded eyes and after ages we went together into a cadence of twitching, groaning, speeding, skidding past each other, shooting. "Felix, Felix, Felix," I wept, "I hate you!" He buried his head under my sweaters, his cheek on my breasts, and asked me why. I wanted to say: because of the loneliness you taunt me with. But the words filled up my mouth like feathers and refused to fly free. I pushed him away and reached for the grass sprouting like an oasis by the side of the bed.

"By the way," his voice followed me, "are you on the pill?"

I began to hit him then, slapped his face forehand and back, pummeled him with my fists, choked and coughed, and I was crying when he caught my wrists and held me still.

"No," I said.

"Diaphragm?"

"No."

"I see," he said.

"What do you see?" I answered, because I was calmer now. "I'm not likely to get pregnant. And if I were to become pregnant, it would not be your business but mine."

"Do you really believe that?"

"No." How could relationships be that rigidly defined, when Valerie's so softly burnished beauty so plainly showed me that I was her keeper. Ezra never knew her.

"Did you want him to knock you up?"

"Yes."

"And he wouldn't."

"No."

He lit a candle. He held it up to my face and set it down again.

"I said to Ezra, 'Let's have a kid,' and he looked at me as if I were crazy, and said, 'If we have a kid, you'll make me wipe its nose, you'll make me stop in the middle of my work and drive the kid to his piano lesson.' Would you believe that, Felix? The kid might have turned out tone-deaf, for all we knew. Whenever Ezra got into a car, he crashed. Finally I said I didn't care, didn't care so long as I could have him. He said it was too late."

"He won't be having any kids with Susan. She's forty years old."

"She's Potiphar's wife, Felix. Didn't you know that? He tried to get me to play Potiphar's wife, but I was too dumb to catch on."

"If you'd known, would you have done it?"

"Who knows?"

"Nobody knows. *Nobody knows the trouble I've seen,*" he sang. He touched me. "You're a lot like me," he said.

I didn't see how.

"When I got married," he said, "we had a caterer and a photographer. The whole scene. Did Ezra tell you?"

"Is she married again?"

"I tried and tried, but, yes, she's married again. She was such a cold damn . . . ."

And the man began to cry. He was out of practice, and his face pinched up and twisted, unaccustomed to that posture, seeming alien and worn in the candle's unforgiving flame. I held his hand and asked him if he were doing any filming and he said No and asked me if I were writing and I said No. "I think I'll go to England," he said, "see what's happening over there."

"Do you want to marry again?" I asked him.

"Yes," he wept, "yes, yes, yes. It terrifies me."

I circled my arms around his neck. "I think I'm going to be able to convert to Judaism at last," I told him; "or at least come to some kind of truce with God. I'm working out an agreement." I was whispering. "Don't you want to know why?"

"It's all the same, sweetheart," he said, but then after a while he said, "Well, I won't knock it. I don't know, nirvana makes more sense to me." He pressed me to him. "Beautiful nirvana." He giggled. "Nirvana's all right, a real good lady. She's got golden hair, magical golden hair, and your Ezra and I spent one night together in Albany, years ago, looking all over town for her. I wonder where she'd gone," he said, and sighed. It struck me that he was a simple man, much simpler than Ezra, and I was grateful to him for that. He moved over to the opposite edge of the bed and asked me to snuff out the candle. I did. I got under the covers and closed my eyes. I thought it was all over, there would be nothing more.

But he pulled me to him, and said, "Put your arms around me, baby, please."

What tenderness was in the way he cradled himself in my arms, I cannot tell you, nor how happy I was and privileged. So the wind moved through the trees beyond our window, music in the air, and I rocked him easily to sleep.

THE NEXT morning he drove me in to the bus stop. I had asked if Happy Jack could come along with us, and Felix let him, but he had to stay in the car while we stood unstoned in the clean air. The bus came. "Hey," said Felix, shuffling his feet and nervously punching my arm. He would drive to Woodstock that afternoon. "I'll call you sometime. Well, you know, sometime when the wheel rolls around, and it's time."

How could I hurt this gentle person? But also, how could I let him hurt me? Calling on that convoluted, wrung humor that my family taught me, that Northerners do not commonly grasp, that serves me from time to time, I said to him, "Don't take any wooden nickels," and waited for him to kiss me goodbye.

He didn't. I got on the bus, and our bus driver, may his soul be blessed for ever, let me off on

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the Upper West Side without making me go all the way in to Port Authority. I let myself into my apartment. The bed was unmade, my old stories that I'd been justifying myself with were strewn around the room, my tongue was thick, my eyes kept drooping, and I kept seeing, wherever I looked, old Aunt May's wedding blanket in the closet in Felix's bedroom. I swallowed some Seconal and lay down, until once more I went to sleep.

AUNT MAY is my mother's eldest sister. She was a librarian, wed late in life, and thereafter has largely devoted her life to covered-dish luncheons sponsored by the Presbyterian church. She's built like the Rock of Gibraltar, and has always looked on our branch of the family with grave mistrust. Her husband, Harold Flagg, made and lost more money in oil and oranges than the rest of us have ever seen, but wound up quite comfortably off; even so, Aunt May with her drawstring mentality was capable of giving my brother, who was then fifteen and very hungry for all the things boys want, a pants hanger for Christmas. Her marriage present to my mother—they despised each other and never forgot their manners—was a meat grinder.

May bore Harold three children. The girl, a kleptomaniac Girl Scout leader, married a Cadwallader from Cocoa; the last I heard from her, she was eager to remove her own daughter to Belgium for a year that she might learn French before the "mimic-center" in her brain closed off at the age of six. The elder boy, Rick, is retarded. May and Harold have set him up with a Seven-Eleven store in Florida; but May, though she is at least seventy by now, has to do all the bookkeeping for him.

Their younger son, Oliver Bob, was my age. The year we lived on a farm outside Richmond, they all came to visit us, and I was humiliated to discover that Oliver Bob played the piano much better than I did. And he had wit even then; I couldn't help liking him, though I tried. We fashioned a tree house in the woods that veered off from the side of the farm; and we bicycled down the hill. He went on to a small college where he majored in Sacred Music, and then, after twenty-one years, he fled the South. Aunt May and Uncle Harold saw no recourse but to employ detectives; but that's usual enough. When they located him, he was renting an apartment in New York City, done all in white with white wall-to-wall carpeting, and he wore a diamond ring on the little finger of his left hand.

They cut off his money and brought him home. He went to work with his brother Rick for a while, stowing groceries in brown bags and taking inventory, and then one day during the dog days he sat down in the armchair in his parents' living room and put a pistol to his temple and blew his brains out. It was Uncle Harold who found him; he picked up the telephone and dialed Aunt May at her church and said, "Mama, I think you might better come on home right now. Babe's in bad trouble." When she asked what was wrong, the old man said, "Babe's in bad trouble, Mama; he won't talk to me. Come on home now, you hear?" She went home.

SO SAD an excuse for a woman, my Aunt May, torments me, because, for all her paucity of imagination, for all her ill-disguised resentment toward the world, that eternal Mississippi Protestant, like my mother she grew up with, knew enough to know that when your niece marries a Yankee Jew, the only decent thing to do is to send a wedding present; and she had so help me God somewhere in her stubborn heart the humanity to choose for that present a wool, electric blanket dyed to a muted mustard, the same hot sweet shade of the strip of sand that used to line the coast from Biloxi to on beyond Pass Christian before the hurricane, I think it was Camille, ripped it all to hell last year. It was one beautiful blanket, believe me, far lovelier than ever my husband dreamed or understood, nor was it ever meant for Susan Alexander to lie under. It was never even meant for Felix. Ah, baby, sweet baby, so in your heart are you covenanted to your wife. Like it or not. Whether I love or have loved you or not.

Whether it's daytime or nighttime.

THIS fool heater is on the blink again and my fingers are blue. Last week Valerie looked at me, we'd done with tutoring for the night, and said, "I'm leaving, I'm going to a school in Maine." I wanted to tear the smile from her face and shove it down her throat. Then she smiled again and this time I wasn't angry. Or mad. Who can dare that effrontery? Even God, spurned by his own loveliest children, set aside for the sake of a mere image, was moved to repent and restore the two tablets of the law that we might live long in the land of our enemies.

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The City in Literature

Irving Howe

SIMPLICITY, at least in literature, is a complex idea. Pastoral poetry, which has been written for more than two thousand years and may therefore be supposed to have some permanent appeal, takes as its aim to make simplicity complex. With this aim goes a convention: universal truths can be uttered by plebeian figures located in a stylized countryside often suggestive of the Golden Age. In traditional or sophisticated pastoral these plebeian figures are shepherds. In naive pastoral they can be dropouts huddling in a commune. Traditional pastoral is composed by self-conscious artists in a high culture, and its premise, as also its charm, lies in the very "artificiality" untrained readers dislike, forgetting or not knowing that in literature the natural is a category of artifice. As urban men who can no more retreat to the country than could shepherds read the poems celebrating their virtues, we are invited by pastoral to a game of the imagination in which every move is serious.

With time there occurs a development or decline from sophisticated to romantic pastoral, in which the conventions of the genre are begun to be taken literally, and then to naive pastoral, in which they *are* taken literally. Yet in all these versions of pastoral there resides some structure of feeling that seems to satisfy deep psychic needs. Through its artifice of convention, the pastoral toys with yet speaks to a nagging doubt concerning the artifice called society. It asks a question men need not hurry to answer: Could we not have knowledge without expulsion, civilization without conditions?

Now, between such questions and pastoral as a genre, there is often a considerable distance. We can have the genre without the questions, the questions without the genre. We can also assume that pastoral at its best represents a special, indeed a highly sophisticated version of a tradition of feeling in Western society that goes very far back and very deep down. The suspicion of artifice and cultivation, the belief in the superior moral and therapeutic uses of the "natural," the fear that corruption must follow upon a high civilization—such motifs appear to be strongly ingrained in Western Christianity and the civilization carrying it. There are Sodom and Gomorrah. There is the whore of Babylon. There is the story of Joseph and his brothers, charmingly anticipating a central motif within modern fiction: Joseph, who must leave the pastoral setting of his family because he is too smart to spend his life with sheep, prepares for a series of tests, ventures into the court of Egypt, and then, beyond temptation, returns to his fathers. And there is the story of Jesus, shepherd of his flock.

Western culture bears, then, a deeply-grounded tradition that sees the city as a place both inimical and threatening. It bears, also, another tradition, both linked and opposed, sacred and secular: we need only remember St. Augustine's City of God or Aristotle's view that "Men come together in the city in order to live, they remain there in order to live the good life." For my present purpose, however, the stress must fall on the tradition, all but coextensive with culture itself, which looks upon the city as inherently suspect.

It is a way of looking at the city for which, God and men surely know, there is plenty of warrant. No one can fail to be haunted by terrible stories about the collapse of ancient cities; no one does not at some point recognize the strength of refreshment to be gained from rural life; no one can look at our civilization without at moments wishing it could be wiped out with the sweep of a phrase.

II

OUR MODERN disgust with the city is foreshadowed in the 18th-century novelists. Smollett, connoisseur of sewage, has his Matthew Bramble cry out upon the suppurations of Bath—"Imagine to yourself a high exalted essence of mingled odors, arising from putrid gums, imposthumated lungs, sour flatulencies, rank arm-pits, sweating feet, running sores." In London Bramble feels himself lost in "an immense wilderness . . . the grand source of luxury and corruption." Foreshadowing the late Dickens, Smollett is also a literary grand-uncle of Louis Ferdinand Céline, impresario of Parisian *pissoirs* and New York subway toilets.

Smollett helps create the tradition of disgust,

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but Fielding, a greater writer, helps set in motion the dominant literary pattern of discovery and withdrawal in regard to the city. It is the pattern of *Tom Jones* and later, in more complicated ways, of those 19th-century novels recording the travels of the Young Man from the Provinces: the youth leaving the wholesomeness of the country and then, on the road and in the city, experiencing pleasures, adventures, and lessons to last a lifetime. Fielding has little interest in blunt oppositions between mountain air and pestilent streets such as Smollett indulges. Smollett's city is more vivid than Fielding's, but Smollett rarely moves from obsessed image to controlled idea: the city, for him, is an item in that accumulation of annoyance which is about as close as he comes to a vision of evil. And thereby, oddly, Smollett is closer to many 20th-century writers than is Fielding. A man of coherence, Fielding knows that the city cannot be merely excoriated, it must be imaginatively transformed. Just as Tom Jones's journey is a shaping into circular or spiral pattern of the picaro's linear journey, so the city of the picaresque novel—that setting of prat-falls, horrors, and what the Elizabethan writer Robert Greene had called "pleasant tales of foist"—becomes in Fielding an emblem of moral vision. The picaro learns the rules of the city, Fielding's hero the rules of civilized existence. In Fielding the city is a necessary stopping-point for the education of the emotions, to be encountered, overcome, and left behind.

It is customary to say that the third foreshadower of the 18th century, Daniel Defoe, was a writer sharing the later, 19th-century vision of the city, but only in limited ways is this true. For Defoe's London is bodiless and featureless. Populated with usable foils, it provides less the substance than the schema of a city; finally, it is a place where you can safely get lost. The rationality of calculation Max Weber assigns to capitalism becomes in *Moll Flanders* an expert acquaintance with geographic maze. Moll acts out her escapade in a city functional and abstract, mapped out for venture and escape—somewhat like a ballet where scenery has been replaced by chalk-marks of choreography. Defoe anticipates the design of the city, insofar as it is cause and token of his heroine's spiritual destitution, just as Kafka will later dismiss from his fiction all but the design of the city—an equivalent to his dismissal of character psychology in behalf of the design of metaphysical estrangement.

III

THE MODERN CITY FIRST appears full-face—as physical concreteness, emblem of excitement, social specter, and locus of myth—in Dickens and Gogol. Nostalgic archaism clashes with the shock of urban horror, and from this clash follows the myth of the modern city. Contributing to, though not quite the main component of this myth, is the distaste of Romanticism for the machine, the calculation, the city.

"The images of the Just City," writes W. H. Auden in his brilliant study of Romantic iconography, "which look at us from so many Italian paintings . . . are lacking in Romantic literature because the Romantic writers no longer believe in their existence. What exists is the Trivial Unhappy Unjust City, the desert of the average from which the only escape is to the wild, lonely, but still vital sea."

Not all Romantics go to sea, almost all bemoan the desert. Wordsworth complains about London in *The Prelude*:

> *The slaves unrespited of low pursuits,*
> *Living amid the same perpetual flow*
> *Of trivial objects, melted and reduced*
> *To one identity, by differences*
> *That have no law, no meaning, and no end.*

This Romantic assault upon the city continues far into our century. Melville's Pierre says, "Never yet have I entered the city by night, but, somehow, it made me feel both bitter and sad." "I always feel doomed when the train is running into London," adds Rupert Birkin in *Women in Love*. Such sentences recur endlessly in modern writing, after a time becoming its very stock in trade. And the assault they direct against the modern city consists of more than sentimentalism, or archaism, or *Gemeinschaft*-nostalgia. The Romantic attack upon the city derives from a fear that the very growth of civilization must lead to a violation of traditional balances between man and his cosmos, a Faustian presumption by a sorcerer who has forgotten that on all but his own scales he remains an apprentice. Nothing that has happened during this past century allows us easily to dismiss this indictment.

Darkened and fragmented, it is an indictment that comes to the fore in Dickens's later novels. In the earlier ones there is still a marvelous responsiveness to the youthfulness of the world, an eager pleasure in the discoveries of streets. Almost every *idea* about the city tempts us to forget what the young Dickens never forgot: the city is a place of virtuosity, where men can perform with freedom and abandonment. And it is Dickens's greatness, even in those of his books which are anything but great, that he displays London as theater, circus, vaudeville: the glass enlarging upon Micawber, Sarry Gamp, Sam Weller. If the city is indeed pesthole and madhouse, it is also the greatest show on earth, continuous performances and endlessly changing cast. George Gissing notes that Dickens seemed "to make more allusions throughout his work to the *Arabian Nights* than to any other book," a "circumstance illustrative of that habit of mind which led him to discover infinite romance in the obscurer life of London." Continues Gissing: "London as a place of squalid mystery and terror, of the grimly gro-

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tesque, of labyrinthine obscurity and lurid fascination, is Dickens's own; he taught people a certain way of regarding the huge city."

In Dickens's early novels there are already ominous chords and frightening overtones. The London of *Oliver Twist* is a place of terror from which its young hero must be rescued through a country convalescence, and the London of *The Old Curiosity Shop,* as Donald Fanger* remarks, "impels its victims . . . to flee to the quasi-divine purity of the country . . . repeatedly identified with the remote springs of childhood, innocence and peace." Yet throughout Dickens's novels London remains a place of fascination: he is simply too great a writer to allow theory to block perception.

In his earlier novels sentimental pastoral jostles simple pleasure in color and sound; and the pattern toward and away from the city, as classically set forth by Fielding, is used in a somewhat casual way until it receives a definitive rendering in *Great Expectations.* But it is in his three great novels–*Bleak House, Little Dorrit,* and *Our Mutual Friend,* with their commanding images of fog, prison, dust-heap–that Dickens works out that vision of our existence which has so brilliantly and oppressively influenced later writing. Here the by-now worn notions of our culture–alienation, depersonalization, forlornness–are dramatized with an innocence of genius. That in cities men become functions of their function; go crazy with the dullness of their work; transform eccentricities into psychic paralysis; soon come to look as if they themselves *were* bureaucracies; and die without a ripple of sound–all this Dickens represents with a zest he had not yet learned to regard as ill-becoming. He enlarges his earlier comic gifts into the ferocious splendor of the Smallweeds, the Guppys, the Snagsbys, so that even as the city remains a theater, the play is now of a hardening into death.

Not only, as Edmund Wilson remarks, does Dickens develop the novel of the social group; he becomes the first to write the novel of the city as some enormous, spreading creature that has gotten out of control, an Other apart from the men living within it. We have learned to speak lightly of "society" as something pressing and enclosing us, but imagine the terror men must have felt upon first encountering this sensation! Reading these late novels of Dickens we seem to be watching a process like that of the earth being buried beneath layers of ice: a process we now can name as the triumph of the Collective. And to this process Dickens's most intimate response is a bewilderment he projects onto an alienated space, in that multiplying chaos where Mr. Krook, double of the Lord High Chancellor, reigns and the dust-heap becomes a symbol of the derangements of exchange value. The indeterminacy of urban life, for Dostoevsky a frightening idea, is for Dickens a frightening experience.

As IF in echo, one of Gogol's clerks cries out, "There is no place for me." Not in Petersburg there isn't nor in the grotesque emblem of Petersburg Gogol created. Meek spiritual cripples, his clerks lure us for a moment into sympathy with the smallness of their desires. But perhaps out of that awe at the endlessness of suffering which leads Faulkner and Leskov into harshness, Gogol treats pathos not as pathetic but as the material for comedies of irreducible disorder. The grander the city, the more wormlike its ceatures. Socially fixed, the clerks are personally erased. Reduced to clerkness, one of them takes home documents to copy for pleasure–this zero reveling in his zero-ness recalls another zero, Peretz's Bontche Shveig, who when asked in heaven to name his ultimate desire, requests a hot roll with butter each morning.

How can one bear such a world, this Gogol-city of innumerable petty humiliations? By a gesture signifying the retribution of arbitrariness. In "The Overcoat" Akaky Akakievich (in Russian a name with cloacal associations) affirms himself only after death, when Petersburg is haunted by an Akakyish specter: an excremental cloud hanging over this excremental city. In "The Nose" a character finds that his nose has simply quit his face, with a sauciness he would not himself dare. But how can a nose quit a face? (As like ask Kafka how a man can turn into a cockroach.) When the weight of the determined becomes intolerable, an arbitrary gesture that changes nothing yet says everything may come to seem a token of freedom. The nose leaves the face because Gogol *tells* it to.

The figures and atmospheres of Dickens and Gogol are appropriated by Dostoevsky, but in his novels men appear as fully conscious beings, their alienated grotesqueness elevated to psychological plenitude. The life of man in the city becomes a metaphysical question, so that in those airless boarding houses into which Dostoevsky crams his characters there is enacted the fate of civilization. Raskolnikov's ordeal relates to Petersburg and Christianity: Can man live in this world, is there a reason why he should? *Crime and Punishment* offers a wide repertoire of city sensations, not as a catalogue of display but as a vibrant correlative to Raskolnikov's spiritual dilemmas. God and the Devil still live in this city, the former as idiot or buffoon, the latter as sleazy good-natured petit-bourgeois. That is why in Dostoevsky the city of filth retains a potential for becoming a city of purity. The city brings out Raskolnikov's delutions: it is the locale of the modern fever for mounting sensations, for the modern enchantment with the sordid as a back-alley to beatitude. The city is also the emblem of Raskolnikov's possible redemption: it is the locale of men who share a

* Let me here record my debt to the brilliant writings on the theme of the city and literature by Donald Fanger and John Raleigh.

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community of suffering and may yet gain the ear of Christ. Never does Dostoevsky allow the attractions of nihilism to deprive him of the vision of transcendence. In "Notes from Underground" the city bears a similar relation, what might be called a dialectical intimacy, with the narrator: each of his intellectual disasters is publicly reenacted as a burlesque in the streets. More than social microcosm or animated backdrop, the city provides Dostoevsky with the contours and substance of his metaphysical theme.

IV

Let us abruptly turn from what literature may tell about the city to what the city does in and to literature.

• The city as presence brings major changes in narrative patterns. Abandoning the inclusive tourism of the picaresque, the 19th-century novel often employs a spiral-like pattern; first a pull toward the city, then a disheartened retreat to some point of origin (the blacksmith shop in *Great Expectations*, the chestnut tree in *The Charterhouse of Parma*). Elements of pastoral seem still attached to this narrative configuration, for one of its tacit ends is to retain in the novel clusters of feeling that flourished best in earlier genres. Lionel Trilling describes this kind of narrative:

> . . . equipped with poverty, pride and intelligence, the Young Man from the Provinces stands outside life and seeks to enter. . . . It is his fate to move from an obscure position into one of considerable eminence in Paris or London or St. Petersburg, to touch the life of the rulers of the earth. He understands everything to be "a test."

And then? Always the same denouement: the Young Man's defeat or disillusion, and his retreat to the countryside where he can bind his wounds, cauterize his pride, struggle for moral renewal. Even more striking than its presence in novels as explicitly hostile to the city as *Great Expectations* and *Sentimental Education* is the way this pattern dominates novels in which the author seems consciously to intend a celebration of the city. For Balzac Paris is a place of "gold and pleasure," and the central portion of *Lost Illusions* evokes a stormy metropolis of excitement and sheer animatedness. Yet even this most cosmopolitan of novels follows the pattern of attraction and withdrawal, bringing its hero Lucien back to the countryside in bewilderment and thereby offering a distant nod to pastoral. At the end, to be sure, Balzac's cynicism triumphs (one almost adds, thank God) and Lucien is seen in the tow of the devil, who will take him to the city where life, naturally, is more *interesting*: the city, as Balzac said, that "is corrupt *because* it is eminently civilized."

If the pattern of 19th-century fiction forms a spiral to and away from the city, it is in the sharpest contrast to later novels in which the city becomes a maze beyond escape. In *Ulysses* and *The Trial* the traditional journeys of the hero are replaced by a compulsive backtracking: there is no place else to go, and the protagonist's motions within the city stand for his need, also through backtracking, to find a center within self.

• The city allows for a more complex system of social relationships than any other locale. Sociologists keep repeating that the city impels men into relationships lacking in warmth, often purely functional and abstract; and from this once-revolutionary perception they slide into nostalgia for an "organic community" located at notoriously imprecise points in the past. For the novelist, however, the city's proliferation of casual and secondary relationships offers new possibilities: the drama of the group and the comedy of the impersonal. The experiences of Ulysses for which Homer had to arrange complicated journeys, Joyce can pack into a day's wandering through a single city. There follows the possibility of fictions constructed along the lines that the Soviet critic M. M. Bakhtin calls a "polyphonic" structure, in which social loss may yield literary advance. Dostoevsky's novels, writes Bakhtin, "caught intact a variety of social worlds and groups which had not [yet] . . . begun to lose their distinctive apartness" and thereby "The objective preconditions were created for the essential multilevel and multivoice structure of the polyphonic novel."

To which I would add two observations: 1) The rise of the city is a blessing for minor characters who might otherwise never see the light of day; and 2) The inclination of some novelists to employ a multiplicity of narrative points of view has much to do with the rise of the city.

• As the city becomes a major locale in literature, there occur major changes in regard to permissible subjects, settings, and characters. The idea of literary decorum is radically transformed, perhaps destroyed. Literature gains a new freedom; everything, which may be too much, is now possible. Out of the dogmas of anti-convention, new conventions arise. The city enables the birth of new genres: who could imagine surrealism without Paris?

In the novel of the city, a visit to a slum can serve as a shorthand equivalent to a descent into hell, as in *Bleak House* or *Redburn*. An address, a neighborhood, an accent—these identify the condition of a man, or the nature of an act, quite as much as social rank or notations of manners once did. So powerful, at first liberating and then constricting, do these new conventions become that in *The Waste Land* their rapid evocation permits a summary vision of an entire culture. The typist's life as a familiar barrenness, the dialogue in the bar as a characteristic plebeian mindlessness, the conversation between upper-class hus-

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band and wife as a recognizable sterility—these serve as the terms of an overarching spiritual assessment.

As the city breaks down traditional rankings, there emerges the plebeian writer or the writer of fallen circumstances. The city erases family boundaries, in one direction toward those rootless wanderers of the streets first imagined by Edgar Allen Poe, and in the other direction toward the extended families pictured by Dostoevsky. The city yields stunning and rapid juxtapositions: "In Paris," gloats Balzac, "vice is perpetually joining the rich man to the poor, and the great to the humble."

The city thereby offers endless possibilities of symbolic extension. In Gissing's *New Grub Street* it becomes a place of paralyzing fatigue, a grayness of spirit that finds its extension in the grayness of a London winter. To Flaubert in *Sentimental Education*, as if to anticipate Max Weber's fear that we are entering "a long polar night of icy darkness and hardness," Paris comes to represent a collective yielding to *acedia* and nihilism, so that as we read we have the sensation of watching men turn slowly into stone, a whole civilization in process of quiet petrifaction.

The city affects literature in still another way: it provides a new range of vocabularies, from the street argot of a Céline to the ironic urbanities of the early Auden, from the coarse eloquence of Balzac's Parisians to the mixture of racy street-Jewishness and intellectual extravaganza of Bellow. The city also encourages that flavorless language, the language of sawdust, we associate with naturalism, as if the denial of will must be reflected in the death of words; yet the city also yields writers like Dickens and Gogol new resources for grotesquerie and mockery. Language can be reduced to bureaucratic posture, as in Guppy's proposal to Esther Summerson in *Bleak House*, employing the terms of a brief for a small-claims court. Or it can be used by Gogol in a style the Russians call *skaz*, described by Yevgeny Zamyatin as "The free, spontaneous language of speech, digressions . . . coinages of the street variety, which cannot be found in any dictionary . . . [and in which] the author's comments are given in a language close to that of the milieu depicted."

• One of the great temptations for the writer dealing with city life is to think of it as a "creature" or "being" independent from and looming over the people who live in it. Apostrophes to London and Paris are frequent in Dickens and Balzac, but these are only feeble rhetorical intimations of what they are struggling to apprehend. The sense that somehow a city has "a life of its own" is so common, it must have some basis in reality; but precisely what we mean by such statements is very hard to say. For Dickens and Gogol, as for Melville, such metaphors become ways of expressing the feeling of littleness of people forming the anonymous masses. For other writers, such as Zola and more recently Dos Passos, these metaphors prepare the way for an effort to embody the life of the group in its own right, to see the collective as an autonomous and imperious organization. Except, however, when the sense of the "thereness" of the city is realized through its impact on individual characters, this effort is usually bound to fail. For even as it begins with a search for extreme objectivity, it ends with a surrender to extreme subjectivity. Since the novelist must keep his attention on the group or institution, neither of which has individuality of consciousness or will, he finds himself forced to speak in his own voice. His wish to create a plot of collective behavior leads him to a style of extreme subjectivity meant to "impersonate" the city. At worst, this kind of writing seems willed, an effort to do for the action through rhetoric what filmmakers try to do for their stories through music; at best, the writing takes on a coarse strength, the poetry of naturalism.

• The city as presence in modern literature gives rise to a whole series of new character types, and these come to be formidable conventions in subsequent writing. A few of them:

The clerk, soon taken to represent the passivity, smallness, and pathos of life in the city: Gogol, Melville, Dickens, and Kafka.

The Jew, bearer of the sour fruits of self-definition: Joyce, Proust, Mann.

The cultivated woman, one of the triumphs of modern writing, inconceivable anywhere but in the city, a woman of femininity and intelligence, seductiveness and awareness, traditional refinement and modern possibilities: Tolstoy's Anna, James's Madame Vionnet, Colette's Julie.

The underground man, a creature of the city, without fixed rank or place, burrowing beneath the visible structure of society, hater of all that flourishes aboveground, meek and arrogant, buried in a chaos of subterranean passions yet gratified by the stigmata of his plight: Dostoevsky and Céline.

• "The psychological basis of the metropolitan type of individual," writes Georg Simmel in his essay, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," "consists in the intensification of nervous stimulation which results from the swift and uninterrupted change of outer and inner stimuli. . . . Lasting impressions . . . use up, so to speak, less consciousness than does the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single phrase, and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions." Dostoevsky and Joyce best capture this experience in the novel, Baudelaire and perhaps Hart Crane in verse.

In *Crime and Punishment* Raskolnikov is assaulted by repeated impressions during his dazed wanderings through Petersburg. He walks along the street and sees a coachman beating his horse

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with gratuitous brutality. He watches a street entertainer grinding out a tune on a barrel organ, tries to strike up a nervous conversation with a stranger and frightens the man away. Another man approaches him and without warning mutters, "You are a murderer." At still another moment he notices a woman in front of him, "at first reluctantly and, as it were, with annoyance, and then more and more intently"; he supposes her a victim of a seduction; the terribleness of the city seems flaringly vivid to him. Each of these apparently stray incidents becomes a tonal equivalent to Raskolnikov's condition, and the seemingly chaotic business of the city is transformed into a map of the protagonist's turmoil.

V

TOGETHER with what I have called the myth of the modern city—enemy of man: pesthole, madhouse, prison—there appear in modern literature at least two other significant visions of urban life. The first is benign, fairly frequent among American writers who have grown up in a culture devoted to the virtues of the countryside. For Henry James the city serves as a token of the possibilities for a high civilization. The Paris of *The Ambassadors* is a mixture of Balzac's Paris (without Balzac's greasepaint, vulgarity, and financial delirium) and an American dream of a European City of Beauty. Paris becomes the shining gloss of man's history, the greatness of the past realized in monuments and manners. Paris stands for the Jamesian vision of a culture far gone in sophistication yet strangely pure, as if no dollar were exchanged there or loyalty betrayed. James was not a naif, he knew he was summoning a city of his desire; and in an earlier novel, *The American,* he had shown himself capable of presenting a Paris sinister and shabby. But now Paris has become the home of civilization, with the splendor of its history yielding the materials for his myth of idealization.

Quite as benign is Whitman's vision of New York. His poems do not capture the terrible newness of the industrial city, for that he does not really know. Whitman's city flourishes in harmony with surrounding forests and green; it figures modestly in the drama of democracy; there is still psychic and social roominess, so that this bohemian singing of the masses can easily knock about in the streets, a New World *flâneur,* without feeling crowded or oppressed. Between the noisy groping city and Whitman's *persona* as the Fraternal Stranger there are still large spaces, and this very spaciousness allows him to celebrate the good nature and easy style of his "camerados" in New York. Not many 19th-century writers can share that comfort.

The second and by far more influential vision of the city proceeds in a cultural line from Baudelaire through Eliot and then through Eliot's many followers. In the smudge of our time, this vision of the city has come to seem indistinguishable from the one I have attributed to the 19th-century masters; but it is distinguishable. There is in Baudelaire little of that recoil from the city about which I have spoken and little, if any, pastoral indulgence. He accepts the city as the proper stage for his being; he apprehends, better than anyone, the nervous currents that make cosmopolitan life exciting and destructive; he writes in the *Tableaux Parisiens* not only of ugliness and debauchery but also, in Proust's words, of "suffering, death, and humble fraternity." A famous passage celebrates the public concerts, "rich in brass," that "pour some heroism into the hearts of town dwellers."

Walter Benjamin notes that "Baudelaire placed the shock experience at the very center of his artistic work," and he remarks also on the relation between that "shock experience" and Baudelaire's "contact with the metropolitan masses . . . the amorphous crowd of passers-by" with whom he "becomes an accomplice even as he dissociates himself from them." In Baudelaire's poems shock serves more than a social end; it has to do with his struggle for a scheme of moral order, a struggle conducted, *in extremis,* through images of disorder. Baudelaire's fear is not, as others had already said before him, that the city is hell: his fear is that it is *not* hell, not even hell. His strategy of shock comes to seem a modernist terror-raid in behalf of classical resolution—not always so, of course, since poets can become secret sharers of the devils they grapple with. It hardly matters whether Baudelaire is seen as a figure of urban satanism or inverted Christianity; he moves in the orbits of both, emanating, in Mallarmé's wonderful line, "a protective poison that we must go on breathing even if we die of it." For Baudelaire, Paris embodies the fear of a life reduced from evil to the merely sordid, a life sinking into the triviality of nihilism.

This is the side of Baudelaire that Eliot appropriates in *The Waste Land*: "Unreal City . . . I had not thought death had undone so many." Eliot lacks Baudelaire's capacity for surrendering himself to the quotidian pleasures of a great city, but he narrows the Baudelairean vision into something of enormous power, perhaps the single most powerful idea of our culture. Eliot's idea of the city has become assimilated to that of the great 19th-century writers, though it is imperative to insist on the difference between madhouse and wasteland, even prison and wasteland. Eliot's vision is then taken up, more and more slackly, by the writers of the last half-century, charting, mourning, and then—it is unavoidable—delectating in the wasteland. Life in the city is shackled to images of sickness and sterility, with a repugnance authentic or adorned; and what seems finally at the base of this tradition is a world-view we might designate as *remorse over civilization.*

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"When one has a sense of guilt after having committed a misdeed," says Freud gloomily, "the feeling should . . . be called remorse." Our guilt, almost casual in its collective sedimentation, proceeds from the feeling that the whole work of civilization—and where is that to be found but in cities?—is a gigantic mistake. This remorse appears first as a powerful release of sensibility, in imaginative works of supreme value, and then as the clichés of *kitsch*, Madison Avenue modernism. The strength of the masters remains overwhelming, from Baudelaire to Eliot to Auden, as they fill their poems with forebodings of the collapse of cities, the crumbling of all man's works. Auden writes in "The Fall of Rome":

Private rites of magic send
The temple prostitutes to sleep;
All the literati keep
An imaginary friend.

**

Caesar's double-bed is warm
As an unimportant clerk
Writes I DO NOT LIKE MY WORK
On a pink official form.

And the Greek poet Cavafy writes about a city waiting, with impatient weariness, for the barbarians to take over:

What does this sudden uneasiness mean,
And this confusion? (How grave the faces have become!)
Why are the streets and squares rapidly emptying,
and why is everyone going back
home lost in thought?

Because it is night and the barbarians have not come,
and some men have arrived from the frontiers
and they say there are no barbarians any more
and now, what will become of us without barbarians?
These people were a kind of solution.

VI

THE SUSPICION of the city and all it represents seems to run so deeply in our culture that it would be impossible to eradicate it, even if anyone were naive enough to wish to. In its sophisticated variants it is a suspicion necessary for sanity, if only because modern civilization cannot yield very much to its demands. And perhaps, for all we know, it is a suspicion emblematic of some ineradicable tragedy in the human condition: the knowledge that makes us cherish innocence makes innocence unattainable.

In traditional pastoral, suspicion of the city is frequently contained through a discipline of irony, an irony proceeding through a sequence something like this: game of the shepherds, seriousness of the game, recognition of how limited are the uses of that seriousness. In modern literature, which can have but little interest in shepherds, there is a violence of response to the city which breaks past the discipline of irony—our experience demands that. But then, just as traditional pastoral suffers the corruptions of literalism, so must the modernist assault upon the city. How, we ask ourselves, can we bring together, in some complex balance of attitude, our commitment to the imaginative truth in what the modern writers show us about the city and our awareness that it may no longer be quite sufficient for us?

We are the children, or step-children, of modernism. We learned our *abc*'s lisping "alienation, bourgeoisie, catastrophe." As against those who brushed aside the 20th century, we were right in believing our age to be especially terrible, especially cursed, on the rim of apocalypse. But today loyalty to the tradition of modernism may require a rejection of its academic and marketplace heirs, and far more important, a questioning of its premises and values.

To deride the epigones of modernism who have reduced it from a vision to a fashion, is no great intellectual risk. We should go farther and ask whether the masters must, in some sense, be held responsible for their corrupted followers, if only insofar as the corruption may point back to some little-noticed or half-hidden flaw in the world-view of the masters. Our problem then becomes to ask whether the vision of the great modernist writers can retain for us the moral urgency and emotional command they so powerfully exerted only a few decades ago.

Clearly this is not a question to be answered in a few paragraphs, though I have tried on an earlier occasion to indicate some opinions.* What matters, in behalf of a serious confrontation with our dominant literary heritage, is to move past (which is not to say abandon) both the authentic pieties we retain from an earlier moment and the false ones that have followed them.

I propose a hypothesis: We have reached the point in our cultural history where it seems both possible and useful to remove ourselves from the partisanship that cultural modernism evoked throughout the past century. Modernism is no longer threatened, nor in question. Its achievements are solid and lasting, its influence incalculable. It is beginning to take a place in the development of Western culture somewhat like that which Romanticism can be said to have taken by, let us suppose, the last two or three decades of the 19th century. *Modernism is beginning to become part of history*, and thereby, for those of us responsive to history, a complex of styles and values we can accept through the mediation of its classical works. Modernism can now enter our moral

* In my essay, "The Culture of Modernism," COMMENTARY, November 1967.

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experience complicated by that awareness of historical distance which is a mark of a cultivated sensibility, and thereby it remains a crucial part of our experience, as Romanticism does too. But if we ask ourselves questions as to the truth of the vision of a Lawrence or an Eliot or a Yeats—and I have some awareness of how tricky such questions can be—then we are no longer likely, and younger people are certainly no longer likely, to answer them with an unbroken passion, that total assent or denial elicited by a cultural movement both contemporary and embattled.

If we lose much by no longer seeing modernism as a contemporary cultural presence, we may gain something too. We may gain a certain detached perspective upon its nature and its achievements, as in recent decades, through discovery, polemic, and reassessment, we have been gaining such a perspective upon the nature and achievements of Romanticism. And if we do approach modernism in this way—as a major component of our culture which the motions of history are transporting into that segment of our experience we call the past—then we may discover that a good many of our earlier enthusiasms will have to be qualified. Not repudiated; qualified. The famous "revolutionary" aspect of modernism may come to have for us an ambiguous value: in part an authentic response to the terribleness of the age and in part a nostalgia for a historically unlocatable and morally dubious "organic past"; in part a profound engagement with the inner nerves of city life and in part a snobbism of the fastidious embraced by those who look down upon the commonplace desires of commonplace mankind; in part an assault upon the calculation that lies at the heart of the bourgeois ethic and in part a cruel dismissal of those fragmented solutions and moderate comforts which it has become easy to dismiss as bourgeois. And we may then have to conclude that the now established hostility to the idea of the city, which is one portion of the modernist legacy, will no longer serve as well as in the past. The vision of the city we inherit from Eliot and Baudelaire, Céline and Brecht—with its ready nausea, packaged revulsion, fixed estrangement—will have to be modulated and itself seen as a historical datum. If we ask ourselves whether we accept the ideas of Shelley or the vision of Blake, their very distance allows us to answer with a sense of ironic qualification that would be difficult to summon for an embattled contemporary. Something of the sort should soon be true in regard to the great figures of modernism.

To remain faithful to its tradition means to call it sharply into question. Can we not, for example, say, yes, the city remains the pesthole and madhouse, the prison and setting of spiritual void that you have shown it to be, nevertheless we can no longer be satisfied with this perception and this perception alone.

Nor is it as if we lack an inspiring model from within literary modernism itself. No writer has portrayed the city with such severity as James Joyce. Every assault that the modernist literary tradition can make upon the city appears in *Ulysses,* magnified in scope and feverish with intensity. Yet that assault is also, in *Ulysses,* transcended through a skeptical humaneness, a tolerance beyond tolerance, a recognition that man was not put on this earth to scratch his eyes out. Of all the writers who render the modern city, it is Joyce who engages in the most profound struggle with nihilism, for he sees it everywhere, in the newspaper office and the church, on the street and in the bed, through the exalted and the routine. Joyce, says Richard Ellmann, shows that "the world of cigars is devoid of heroism only to those who don't understand that Ulysses' spear was merely a sharpened stick . . . and that Bloom can demonstrate the qualities of man by word of mouth as effectively as Ulysses by thrust of spear." The theme of *Ulysses,* says Ellman, is simply that "casual kindness overcomes unconscionable power." Does it? In reality? In Joyce's book? I hardly know but cherish Ellmann's sentence, as I believe Joyce would have too.

We may destroy our civilization, but we cannot escape it. We may savor a soured remorse at the growth of civilization, but that will yield us no large or lasting reward. There is no turning back: our only way is a radical struggle for the City of the Just.

The City of the Just . . . the phrase rings a little hollow right now, so far do we seem to be from it. Still, we shall create genuine cities, which means vital civilizations, or we shall perish. We shall create a high culture, serious and gay, or we shall sink into a rocklike, mainline stupor. Assault upon the city is now to be valued only when understood as the complex play of men who live in cities and would live nowhere else. It is too late for tents and sheep and lutes, or whatever surrogates we may invent. "Perhaps the best definition of the city in its higher aspects," says Lewis Mumford, "is that it is a place designed to offer the widest facilities for significant conversation."

So we must turn again, to build the Just City where men can be decent and humane and at ease, that ease Wallace Stevens speaks of:

> *One's grand flights, one's Sunday baths,*
> *One's tootings at the wedding of the soul*
> *Occur as they occur . . .*

And what will we do in the city? Take our Sunday baths, toot at "the wedding of the soul," read Colette, marvel at Balanchine, and with proper modulations of irony, realize the claims of pastoral, that indestructible artifice of the urban imagination. More than 400 years ago Barnaby Googe understood it all: "God sends me Vittayles for my nede, and I synge Care awaye."

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Scenes from a "Special" Classroom

Johanna Kaplan

THE first time I saw the classroom that was later to become mine, none of the children was in it, and so it was empty of what made it unusual. I looked around that bright, sunny room with its blocks and alphabet charts, small chairs and washed blackboards, and smelling the old familiar smells of chalk dust and tempera paints, I let myself be towed away by a wash of nostalgic reverie. There, at one side, near the sink, the teacher, in a bright blue smock (imagine! remember? elementary-school teachers wear smocks!), was pouring out cups of slightly sour-smelling orange juice and opening up packs of graham crackers, preparing for the class's mid-morning snack (neatly printed on the blackboard as SNACK), and opposite her, on the center wall, was a bulletin board jumping with free-form multicolored animals headed "Our Trip to the Zoo." It all increased my feeling of heady unreality, and in the clear, airy, early-morning quiet of the room, surrounded by the appealing clarity of half-forgotten children's things, I looked out the window, and with dreamy bittersweetness, began thinking of the Schumann piano pieces I had once played: *Scenes from Childhood*. It could not have been more out of place. Luckily, the teacher, who was busy, had no idea of how I was indulging myself. There were noises filtering in from the corridor, noises that meant the beginning of her working day. "They're here," she said, and as the door was pushed back and forth with terrible force, there they were. First, a blonde heavyset boy who walked slowly and half bent-over; he made animal-like moans, moved his head strangely, and kept biting at the bandages that covered his wrists. He did not sit down. The two boys behind him did—one a darkly handsome child with an intense expression and a painful darting squint. With his tortoise-shell glasses and keyed-up appearance he looked like a nervous, *Times*-reading subway rider, but once in his seat, he began banging his head on the desk, rocking back and forth, and in a high-pitched rhythmic frenzy, repeated, "Rockaway Beach, Rockaway Beach, 1963 Chevvy, 1964 Lincoln Convertible, Hungarian Rhapsody, Hungarian Rhapsody." The boy next to him, a slight, pleasant, ordinary-looking boy, looked at him and doubtfully, tentatively called out his name. "Steven Wolf.* Steven Wolf. Steven *Wolf*? Steven Fox? Steven Lion, maybe? Steven Kangaroo?" These parallel monologues continued and a fourth child entered the room. He too walked with a stoop, his expression was disdainful if not contemptuous, he had a *yarmulke* and Hasidic sidecurls, and as he twirled his sidecurls with his fingers, peered briefly at these two classmates and yelled at the top of his lungs, "*Meshuga! Meshuga!* The doctors, too, and nobody's Jewish."

There was a fifth child in the group—a tall, gawky Negro girl whose gaze was obviously askew, she had been told that someone from the Department of Sanitation was coming to speak to the class that day, and so, in expectation, she came up to me, touched my hair and my face saying, "Where's the garbage? The man is coming to give us free garbage."

"He'll be here later, Darlene," the teacher said, with what I then thought of as amazing equanimity. "That's Miss Kaplan, she's going to help you with reading. Show her your reading book."

"No garbage?" Darlene said. She was clearly disappointed and puzzled, and though still stroking my arm, she kept looking away from me. "Did I see you before and you had different hair in the rain? Did I see you yesterday? Did I see you tomorrow?"

"Miss Kaplan's going to work with you in the library. Show her where it is, she doesn't know."

That was the least of what I didn't know, and in the years since then, what I've become familiar with, what I've come to expect and assume as ordinary occurrences, makes it hard for me to recall for myself how overwhelmingly strange, dramatic, and moving I first found the children, their classroom, and that whole new world.

THAT CLASSROOM, one of five in this very small school, is in a large general hospital in Manhattan, and the children are in-patients in its Child Psychiatry Unit. They live in the hospital for a period of about three months—this length of time determined not by psychiatric considerations but by finances: it is as long as the city, state, or insur-

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* Except for that of the author, the names of all characters appearing in this piece are fictitious.

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ance companies are willing to pay for, and only rare, very wealthy children are able to remain longer. When they come in, they get psychiatric, psychological, and medical evaluations, and during their stay they receive individual psychotherapy, group therapy, milieu therapy, and their parents are seen by psychiatric social workers. Their diagnoses are as varied as their socio-economic and educational backgrounds: from childhood schizophrenia to impulse disorders to psychosomatic illnesses; from Westport, Connecticut, to Flatbush to the South Bronx; from parochial schools, prep schools, progressive schools, public schools, and sometimes no schools at all. In this school, funded and staffed by the New York City Board of Education, there are rarely more than five in a class, but for some children even that's overcrowded, so what their educational lives are like on the "outside," or their teachers' lives, for that matter, I don't even like to imagine.

That I might one day automatically be filling out census forms and income-tax returns with the word "teacher" had never really been a particular plan of mine. Not that I actually had a plan or a goal in that sense: with the typical amorphous snobbery of an English major, I didn't know what I would do, and remember once while still in college, wandering around the aisles of a West Side clothing store, aimlessly taking things off the rack and putting them back. A middle-aged saleswoman, watching me, must have decided that what I needed was a little first-class persuasion, and noticing that I had actually, finally tried on a coat, she went through the ritual of *her* job, telling me first how well the coat looked on me, second, that it was made for me, and seeing that I was still hesitant, pulled out her ultimate convincer. "Other girls come in here and snap up that coat you've got on. *Lots* of girls come in here, believe me. Young girls—they teach." *Young girls they teach, young girls they teach*: I did not buy the coat. So the fact that I have been a teacher for nearly five years now, I at least partially owe to Darlene, who on that day, when I was an undecided volunteer tutor, would have preferred me to be the garbageman. All I knew about her, when we went off down the hall to the library, was that her mother, who had abandoned her, was blind, and that Darlene did not connect looking with seeing. "My mother's eyes are like coals," she said, and later, explaining a picture she had drawn: "The clouds are chasing the sun and the sun is hiding. But the clouds are hunters and they just swallow her up." I had never heard anyone speak that way, and so, drawn to her, I was immediately, if naively, hooked. I went back to school to get an M.A. in Special Education, and at the end of the year, found out that the teacher whose class had first fascinated me so much was now leaving so that the classroom—small chairs, colored chalk, and all the rest—was available, and that if I wanted it, the job was mine. I wanted it, and though I was very uncertain about what I *would* do once I got into that classroom, I had no doubts about the things I would not do. Remembering always the fragility of the children and their special needs, I would never yell or forget anything I had told them, not let calm or even-nature leave me because consistency and stability were what they had to have. I wouldn't let myself make small mistakes out of fatigue or slacking because no mistake was small for them, and anyway, years of mistakes and omissions were what their lives were made up of.

WHEN I go to work in the morning, the bus is often crowded with children who go to the Lycée Français. Always dressed in blue, with European bookbags strapped over their shoulders, they chatter amiably in French, get up to give their seats to old ladies, recite aloud to each other from books they apparently memorize, and when they reach their stop, hold the door open for one another as they file out onto the windy corner. Soon, with their blue coats hung on hooks, they will take out their *cahiers* filled with *leçons*, and standing stiffly behind their chairs will look up expectantly with European gravity, and start off their morning: *Bonjour, Madame.*

"Where the teachers? Where the fuck are you, you fucking teachers? It's school time! Come on, you lazy Miss Kaplan! You drinking coffee with the principal. And you smoking cigarettes—you *bad!*" To all the other children now walking through the corridor on this, a Monday morning (harder because it means that many kids have just come back from a weekend pass), Ralphie, nine years old, so vastly overweight that he is clownishly elephantine in his movements, announces: "Miss Kaplan smoking Marlboros! Gimme some, I know how to smoke cigarettes. You smoke cigarettes and *uh* oh! You could be dead! You better stop it, teacher. My teacher smoking cigarettes!"

"So?" says Diane, a girl from the older class, whose face and body are covered with bandages from where she has cut, picked, and bit at her skin. "So? She could drop dead right now as far as I'm concerned. And you, too, you disgusting retardo."

From the doorway of his room, Diane's teacher Mr. Lehrer calls out, "Hi, Diane."

"Drop dead, Lehrer. You only have one ball. And Kaplan makes me sick. With her *little* kids that she kisses! Phony bitch! And Ralphie Robles retardo!"

Ralphie, who has been hanging onto me so that it's begun to hurt, lets go, and lurches with all his weight onto my feet ("Ralphie! My new suede shoes!" "Yeah," he says, laughing in his discouragingly idiot-like abandon, "they blue." "Not any more," I tell him, "now they're black

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and blue"), and runs off. "Don't worry, teacher, I be right back. I just gotta do one thing. I just gotta kill Diane."

"Kill me! Kill me!" Diane begins to wail histrionically, and throws herself down in the middle of the corridor. "They won't let me kill myself. I wish somebody *would* kill me."

Mr. Lehrer catches Ralphie who's begun a lunge at Diane.

"Kill me! Kill me! I don't even care if a *retardo* kills me. Go ahead! Kill me!"

But because he's locked in Mr. Lehrer's arms, Ralphie can't move, so he spits at her long distance, yelling, *"Puta! Maricon!"*

"Big deal if he curses me in Spanish. I don't even *speak* Spanish. Kill me! Kill me!"

"Liar! Bullshit fucking liar! She do too know what *puta* means. I tell her lotsa times!"

"It means 'your mother,'" says Randi, an eight-year-old girl in my class, who is herself often the butt of other children's attacks. "Your mother, your mother, your mother," Randi directs her whiny, singsong taunt toward everyone but Ralphie, for whom she reserves the specialty: "And you don't even *have* a mother. Motherless bitch! Motherless bastard!"

"Randi! You fucking Randi!" Ralphie screams, really upset now, crying bitterly and struggling so forcibly that one of the male nursing aides comes over to help Mr. Lehrer. "You *smell*, you disgusting, and all you ever do is writing pussy in your notebook. And they *special* notebooks. Not for writing pussy."

"Santiago! Santiago! Eladio Santiago!" Randi screams, thinking that by yelling out another child's Spanish name she can qualify as a Spanish curser.

Ralphie is still struggling, flailing and kicking, and since he's a boy who has hurled desks, chairs, and the piano bench over much smaller provocations, the feeling in the narrow hallway is very tense, and for the adults, already weary. We have been through it so many times before, and after all it's just the beginning of a new week, the very first few minutes of Monday morning. I am about to attempt to get the rest of my class inside the room, when Andy, a seven-year-old autistic boy from the youngest class, whose angelic, remote expression and pure, bell-like voice I can by this time sadly and immediately associate not with childhood purity but with childhood schizophrenia, walks through the fracas, and typically oblivious to it, fixes on something else entirely.

"A black boy with a green yo-yo," he says. "The black boy has a green yo-yo." Andy's eyes, focused on the yo-yo, are following it up and down, up and down, while Clifford, a slight Negro boy in my class, who is quick to anger and quick to strike out, has, in a move unusual for him, been keeping to himself on the fringes of the action.

"You call me a black nigger? You calling me a black nigger? I'll beat your ass in, you dummy. I'll train you right."

I can usually get through to Clifford, especially if it's before he's worked himself up to a crescendo, so putting my arm around him I say, "Come on, Cliff, that's not what Andy means and you know it. There are things he doesn't understand and beating him up won't teach him anything."

"Oh yeah? Then how come that's how they teach it to me? He gotta be trained!"

"CRUSH, kill, destroy! Crush, kill, destroy!": it's Randi again, jumping in with a chant that she knows the other kids almost always pick up on.

"Randi," I scream, and this time the anger and distaste in my voice are genuine, not the mock severity I sometimes put on, *"We* are going into class. But I don't want to see you in there until you can figure out how to be a little nicer to other people. You know exactly what you did, Randi. You picked on people who were already feeling upset."

"Hah!" says Cliff, "I bet I know what *she'll* do. She'll say she has a stomach ache."

Not me, though, I don't have a stomach ache. What *I* have is the familiar frenzied feeling inside my head, as if a million telephones are ringing separately, and I will have to answer them simultaneously and keep on answering them, too, because there's no chance that they'll stop. In fact, this isn't so far from the truth: even though this is a day whose beginning has been more than usually hectic (and predicting how days or children will turn out is something I've generally stopped doing, having so often come up against the suddenness of undreamed of improvements or equally inexplicable, unrelieved, crashing chaos)—there is almost never a time when I can mentally, emotionally slacken, feel private. That is not to say there is no job-slacking: once a week, all three classes watch films together. I am not teaching, the focus of the children is not on me, but if I begin to pay attention to the film (and I often do), Hector may decide that Timmy has taken his pencil, Donald that Carol has "touched" his chair, and Stuart, in the corner by himself in the dark, will very likely begin to hallucinate. At least two fights, and one child in such terrified, remote inaccessibility that I will not be able to get through to him for the rest of the day.

"My monster comes back when you go out of the room," said a ten-year-old boy in my class, who could draw this particular recurring hallucination—a Bosch-like devil—with uncanny artistic power and skill. A sad testament to his illness, though, and at least temporarily, an apparent cul-de-sac for his remarkable talent, this hallucination, his "monster" was the only thing he *could* draw, so that even when Mark tried to

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draw other things, the familiar, hideously frightening, cloven-hoofed nightmare figure was always what turned up on the page. Once, after a current-events discussion to which Mark had seemingly given scant attention, he decided to make a peace poster. Working with his characteristic slow, scrupulous, painfully perfectionistic intensity ("It's lugubrious, Miss Kaplan, I'm afraid there's too much cross-hatching"), days later Mark came up with his peace poster: holding up a peace sign and garlanded with love beads, there he was, with his pig snout and malevolent eyes, Mark's monster. "I've done it again," he said, and there was no question about it.

Probably because of Mark's outstanding artistic ability, his hallucination had a visual vividness which is unusual for the children I've taught; the instructions (or message) of his monster weren't. Typically, such children's "voices" tell them to hurt themselves, to run in front of cars, to jump out windows, and unsurprisingly, they feel terrified and powerless. Often, if you can make a child feel that you, in your own person, are stronger than the voices, can promise protection against the voices, it helps. I always feel vaguely dishonest when I do this: what am I stronger than after all? What am I promising, and how can my voice and my face and my expression provide the absolute, doubt-free certainty that is so essential for these kids when they're caught in their times of terror? So, caught myself by the immediate pressure of their needs, I suddenly become an actress. When Julio came into my class, it was already June, and because my mind was elsewhere—on my own upcoming summer vacation—I did not make much effort to get to know him, to get a feeling for myself of what he was really like. He spoke very little English, in fact *spoke* very little, and I couldn't even figure out how much he could understand. (Many children, when they first come in, prefer to dissemble, having found that safer.) But Julio was tough, feisty, militantly remote, and apparently uncomprehending; every so often, he'd get up from his seat and unpredictably, intently, violently, begin punching someone. What I was told about Julio was that he had made several attempts to jump off roofs or high window ledges in response to voices, and what I noticed about him was that he always managed to get his fingers caught in drawers or doors, and would sit or stand in places that made other people trip him or knock against him "accidentally." Once, in trying to get at his pencil, he emptied out his pocket: out came clips, thumbtacks, staples, scissors, and enormous safety pins. It was lethal enough for me to know that it was definitely time to make my "speech"—"speech" because it is more or less set, "speech" because I'd made it so many times before.

"Julio, *here* nobody is going to let you hurt yourself, *I* won't let you hurt yourself. You're a good, smart, and lovable boy, and we're going to try to see that you have *good* things happen to you. Not things that hurt you." My arm was around him as I spoke, I felt my own voice rise with belief as the rest of the class's noises went on as usual, and suddenly Julio was crying. Grabbing my hand, he led me over to his desk where he had stashed away a veritable arsenal. "You don't need these," I said, and pushed all his thumbtacks and sharpened pick-up sticks into the pocket of my smock. I was moved, but somehow felt very cheap: all this for and from a boy I barely knew. *Was* he good? *Was* he smart? *Was* he lovable? And was it possible that no one had ever said this to him before, genuinely knowing it to be so and meaning it?

Often, our responses to children in extremis have an impatient, crude practicality. Jacob, a twelve-year-old from a European, ultra-Orthodox Jewish family, had been told by his voices not to eat and not to leave the house. Scandalized by his sudden peculiarity, his parents kept him locked in a closet for a few days. This was in fact how his father had spent the better part of his own adolescence: hiding out in a closet somewhere in Central Europe. When Jacob first came to the hospital, the voices seemed to go away, but they, too, apparently were only hiding out. After a while, Jacob, with naggy stubbornness, was refusing to go into the classroom at certain times: the voices told him not to. "Jacob," the head teacher said to him finally, "yesterday the voices told you not to go to math, today that you can't go to English. What'll they tell you tomorrow? No social studies? *I'm* stronger than the voices and I'm telling you right now—you *can* go to school."

THE voice I hear right now, though, on this particular Monday morning, is Randi's. Sitting outside in the hall with a nurse, just as the door closes, she yells out for last licks, "Goddamn you, Kaplan, you bitch! How come you let *him* have the yo-yo and you won't let me have it? It's my yo-yo, anyway. Give it back to me! Stealer!"

It's a touchy point, this: Cliff often *has* taken things belonging to other kids, and insisted that they were his with convincing, aggrieved assertion. I choose to believe him this time (as I have often mistakenly done in the past), and for a change find out that I'm right. "My foster mother gave it to me," Cliff explains. "My real mother didn't call me up. She *knows* the phone number, she just still losted."

"She don't know where she at? Or *you* don't know where she at?" Ralphie asks. He has been turning the lights on and off, pulling the shades up and down, and turning the thermostat back and forth, staring down into it.

"What are you looking for down there, Ralphie?" I once asked him.

"Quarters. They got quarters down there."

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"No quarters," I said. "There's not one single quarter in that whole thermostat."

"Nickels, then. You look hard enough, teacher, and you see a nickel over there. No lie, teacher, no lie."

"Where?" I said, squinting down the thermostat with him, practically believing.

"Snag, Miss Kaplan! Snag! I snagged you, teacher! They don't got no nickels down there. Unless you wanna put some down there for me. You gonna do it? Come on—I bring you over your purse and all you gotta do is throw them in."

But this morning Ralphie is not looking for quarters or nickels; he seems drained from all his battles. "I'm sleepy," he says. "I'm not doing no work," and dragging his chair up to my desk, he puts his head down on it.

Cliff is still involved with the question about his mother. "*She* knows where she's at, she's looking for my father."

"*Which* father?" Ralphie says, logily raising his head.

"None of your fucking b. i. business, Robles. You're not my doctor and you're not my social worker." At almost any other time, this would be the beginning of a fight, but Ralphie just isn't tuned in enough.

"Teacher, I'm hungry," he says. "Gimme a cookie, gimme around twelve cookies."

"Ralphie, suppose we get the day started before we go into the restaurant business. OK? Where's Nidia?"

"She in section," Ralphie says.

"Session," Cliff corrects him.

"Section!"

"Session. *Session,* you dummy!"

"OK," I say in an over-loud voice, "Nidia's with her doctor, Randi's in the hall, and *we're* in here. Let's get started."

THE FIRST THINGS to do are changing the charts: the day, the date, the weather, and the class jobs. Often these are angled for and squabbled over, too (it's no small thing knowing which day comes after another, and figuring out the date after a weekend is, for some children, an accomplishment to be truly prized). This morning, only Cliff wants to change the cards indicating the day of the week and the date. He is about to fix the weather chart, too, when Ralphie shakes himself up, saying, "I gonna do the weather. It's cloudy!" and stuporously dragging himself out of his chair, he reaches out for the "cloudy" card. Cliff, in the meantime, has run over to the window, flinging up the already precarious shade.

"You say it's cloudy, Robles? You say it's cloudy? Dare me it's cloudy, Goddamn you! Just dare me!"

We are on a very high floor and there is, in fact, a tiny piece of sun—about a nickel or even a quarter's worth—it's an inert, glazed, ugly sun hanging somewhere over the bridge and the water towers, the construction sites, the railroad tracks, and, closest to us, the projects.

"That's my *house,*" new children often say when they first look out the classroom windows and see the projects. And even if I know from their admissions slips that they actually live in Brooklyn or the Bronx, I have a hard time convincing them. "That's my aunt's house, then," they usually say. Or "My mother's friend, she lives there."

It's a lucky thing for all of us that I like looking out the windows, too, so that I rarely feel it as an interruption when, in the midst of working with one child on math, I hear, "Look, teacher, *look*! Two junkies down there having a fight! In the how you call it—telephone blocks."

"Telephone *booth,*" I say, but I'm out of my seat in a second.

This time, though, what's in question is the weather. I walk over to the windows with the two boys and say, "It's cloudy now, but there's a little bit of sun up there, and maybe it'll get really sunny later on." So Ralphie can put up his "cloudy" card and Cliff is promised that *he's* the one who can change the chart if the weather changes. Done. On to changing the "jobs": each different group has its own hierarchy of preferences, and though these jobs rotate daily, it's not uncommon for a child who doesn't like his job of the day to charge me angrily with being unfair—"See! He got Snack! He always gets what *he* wants!"—and either sulkily threaten to do "no work all day and if you think you can make me, I'll smash you," or begin hurling books, games, chairs, and once in a while an entire desk. Many groups have considered "Helper" the most prestigious job: the Helper goes on errands, and best of all, gets to open doors and closets with the teacher's keys.

"What you got in there, Miss Kaplan?" Ralphie often asks over and over again, opening up my coat closet for the pure joy of it.

"What does it *look* like I have in there?"

"Your coat. Your *winter* coat. It made of rabbits. You got the rabbits? You caught them?"

"Ralphie, did *I* catch the rabbits? Did *I* make the coat?"

He looks up at my face and catches the tone in my voice. "No," he says, and starts laughing, but I'm never sure if *he's* sure.

The favored job in this group is Snack: as far as they're concerned, the only way you can be sure of not being cheated at snacktime is if you're the one who gives out the snack yourself, and Ralphie, who grabs at any and all food, endlessly, compulsively, has discovered that the snack monitor, if he's so inclined, can have the quickest and easiest access to fringe benefits. Today, it's Ralphie's turn to do Snack, but back with his head down on my desk, he barely acknowledges what he would ordinarily celebrate.

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In the meantime, I write the morning plans on the board: English (this includes any academic activity outside math, and because both the age and grade levels are often so varied, it usually means that each child is doing something entirely different), Word Game, Snack—anticipated not only because of the food, but because at its best, Snack has an intimate, peaceful quality, and fights, desk-throwing, and accusations are a million miles away. Often, during Snack, listening to a child's story of something that happened to him when he was "little"—a gift he got that broke, a trip on a train to a place whose name he doesn't know ("they got a funeral house there across the street and they give you calendars"), I am given the momentary illusion of entering into a life that is really quite alien from my own. After Snack, there is Gym, and then it's time for lunch.

WHERE we are in this day is English. Cliff, of all the kids in this group, has come closest to having made a seemingly magical, dramatic gain. In math, he still bangs his head on the desk, whimpers, tears up papers, and writhes on the floor. When he first came, he used to do that in reading, too, but it tapered off and he began reading books on a first- and second-grade level, though he is ten. He was very proud of finishing so many books, and one day, looking through the shelves for a new one, picked out a fourth-grade history text.

"That might be hard," I said, honestly believing it to be, "but if you like that book, I can read it *to* you."

"That's hard? You daring me that it's hard? You *daring* me?" And having been attracted by a picture of Christopher Columbus, he began hesitantly, but accurately enough, to read the chapter. I felt that I couldn't praise him enough; hugging me and then the book, he danced around the room and ran out into the hall to tell his news to anyone who was passing through. I had never seen Cliff so happy, but only fifteen minutes later, he got up from his chair and systematically tipped over all the other kids' juice cups, and knocked down everything else that was on their desks.

Still, that history book became Cliff's new book, its thickness adds to the prestige (fat books are better); during this Monday morning's English time, he takes the book out, and with a kind of touching, theatrical diligence begins looking at the questions I've written out for the chapter on Andrew Jackson.

"I can't *do* it," he begins whimpering. "It's too hard."

"You *can* do it. You do hard work all the time."

"I *can't*," his whimper gets louder, his speech more discernibly infantile: this is the stuff that head-banging and self-mutilating tantrums grow out of.

"Cliff," I say very sternly, "what happens to people who pretend that they're dumb?"

"They *get* dumb," he says. He knows the answer—mine admittedly, and whether it's true or not, this simple exchange will often get him over the awful hurdle of beginning.

What happens to people who pretend that they're dumb? Who try it on, improve on it, and seeing nothing else around, keep it? It's something I've had cause to think about much too often. Look at Ralphie over there, lying slumped down on my desk. Called "retardo" by the other kids, considered to be "within the retarded range" by careful psychological testing, he's a boy who at ten can barely read or do the most elementary arithmetic, can often not give you the names of ordinary, everyday objects in either English or Spanish, can stick his head into a hot oven and apparently not feel the difference or understand the reason for other people's alarm ("OK, OK teacher, sweetheart, I won't do nothing bad again. Why you gotta look so *serious*? Man, you look *ugly* when you look like that! Right, she look ugly? Right, she look like a witch?"). Yet, there are things that Ralphie understands and remembers that keep me wondering. A discussion about Christmas, for example, which was begun by Nidia who is Pentecostal and very fervent about it.

Nidia: "Christmas is the birthday of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

Randi: "How could God have a son? God doesn't have a dick."

Me: "Many people believe—"

Nidia (screaming): "Miss Kaplan! You don't believe in Jesus Christ? You don't believe in *Jesus*?"

"You think she believe in Jesus?" said Ralphie, awake suddenly, and laughing loudly. "Miss Kaplan don't believe in God, she don't believe in hell, she don't believe in *nothing*!"

"How do *you* know whether or not I believe in God, Ralphie?"

"You *said* it. Remember? You said some people do and some people don't. You *said* it, right?"

I'm sure I did say it, but when or under what circumstances, I do not at all remember. Not Ralphie, though. Not Ralphie, who, if I ask him right now to tell me the color of his shirt, will probably say, "It blue, I mean it red. I forgot, teacher. How you call it?"

At the moment, I'm not calling it anything, but trying to ease, tease, coax, pinch him out of his stupor and into his schoolwork. With the help of some cookies, he makes it: he is going to write a story for the class newspaper. It's a topic he's already decided on—"What I Want to Be When I Grow Up." The system is this: he talks, I write, he copies it onto rexograph paper which gets cranked through a machine, and soon, mirac-

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ulous as God's dick, turns Ralphie's hilly, uneven letters into official purple print on white paper. "When I grow up I want to be a cop. Because I like guns. And I would help children cross the street. And I would get robbers and put them in jail. If somebody fell in the street I would take them to the hospital."

While Ralphie is slowly, painfully copying out his story and Cliff is nervously, repetitively calling out, "How did Andrew Jackson get the name Old Hickory?" Randi returns to the room.

"I'm sorry, Miss Kaplan," she says with a simper. "I won't provoke anyone anymore," and instantly sensing the concentration of the two boys, stands in front of Ralphie and says, "King Kong plays ping pong with his ding dong." King Kong because of Ralphie's size and weight—a name, incidentally, he's proud of; the rest because of his frequent, open masturbation. Genuinely engrossed in his schoolwork, Ralphie only giggles, but Cliff immediately gets up, and unbuttoning his clothes and undulating, sings out, "Suck my dick, it's *so* soft, I don't need any vaseline, suck my dick."

Who won't provoke anyone anymore? "Randi," I say, "your work is on your desk." And most likely, that's exactly where it will stay: on her desk and untouched. Although Randi is bright, and despite all her difficulties not behind in any subject, she's a child I've gotten absolutely no place with. If I give her specific assignments, she simply refuses to do them; if I tell her she may choose what she wants from the various books and materials around the room, she wanders aimlessly, nervously, announcing with disdainful bravado that she's interested in nothing.

"Reading sucks, science sucks, math sucks, social studies sucks, art sucks, puzzles suck. And music sucks, too."

Cliff has now buttoned his clothes and is sitting down again. "Snack time?" he wants to know.

The mention of food rouses Ralphie: "We bake this afternoon, Miss Kaplan? We got baking? What we gonna bake?"

"You *voted* on it Ralphie. You tell *me*—what are we going to bake?"

"Pizza!" yells out Cliff. "Yay, pizza! We eat all that pizza ourself and give the other classes little skinny mini baby pieces."

"Pizza, yuch!" says Randi. "Pizza is vomit. It looks like vomit and it smells like vomit. It *is* vomit."

"It look like vomit and it smell like vomit but it taste *good*," Ralphie says. "You don't want your piece, I eat it. OK?"

Randi is beginning to answer when Nidia, returned from session, walks in. She is wearing a lovely yellow lacy dress and a yellow poncho that she crocheted herself—her church outfit—but walking slowly, her eyes to the floor, she looks sullen, angry, and absolutely miserable. This is in great contrast to her usual style: she has a lively theatricality, that often, uncontrolled, passes over into the purely manic. She walks and moves in a way that prompted Cliff to say when she first came, "She supposed to be ten? Shit, that girl's no ten. She a little *woman*." In fact, Nidia never admits that she's ten; she tells everyone that she's thirteen, "a teen-ager," and closes her eyes and throws her head back suggestively when she talks about what she "does" with her boyfriends. With her eyes similarly closed, her hips moving and her lips parted, in perfect imitation of a nightclub singer, she croons Spanish lovesongs whenever she sees the high-school students. Her special focus among them is a very fragile-looking, undersized heroin addict who pays her almost no attention and on whom she does not give up. To me, she has often said, "I know why you're not married, Miss Kaplan. You wanna stay free—you know what I mean. If you get married or you get babies, you can't do what you want anymore. With your *boy*friends."

RIGHT NOW Nidia looks neither like a teen-ager nor a nightclub singer: wheezing (she has asthma) and sad-eyed, her knowing, street-child ways made all the more poignant by her little-girl-dressed-up-for-church look, she suddenly reminds me of the child in *Forbidden Games*—stunned by the bombs and just sitting by the road. Probably she's just had a difficult session, a bad weekend pass, or both.

"Nidia," I say, catching her around the waist, "that's a beautiful dress."

"It's not," she says tearily. "It's ugly."

"That's right!" Cliff yells out, jumping up. "It's ugly. Ugly like you, you ugly cunt. You walk like a cunt, you act like a cunt, and that's what you are one—a nasty, ugly cunt!"

Instantly, all of Nidia's waiflike, pathetic teariness is gone, and the two of them are at each other punching, kicking, pulling, tearing, scratching, throwing things; trying to separate them, I, too, get kicked and scratched ("Just stay out of this, bitch!" Nidia shrieks), while Randi, somewhat cautious but still pleased, comes up with an uncertain "Pussy! Dick! Pussy!—I'm *only* saying the name of a cat," and Ralphie, confused and overwhelmed by this terrible agitated excitement he cannot understand but cannot stay out of, stumbles forward laughing and begins hurling chairs and desks. I am able to stop Ralphie and Randi, but Cliff and Nidia are way beyond anything I can do: in their small furious world, no one else now exists, and besides I've never learned judo. The male nursing aide comes in; he, too, gets clawed and mauled, and with unearthly cries sounding down the hallway, Cliff is dragged out, still kicking and screaming. Nidia, hysterical, folds in my arms, sobbing, "It's because of *him* I'll never get better. See that? Now I'll *never* get well."

But in a few minutes, she begins to get herself

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together, and I, feeling like Muriel Spark's Miss Brodie, say, "Nidia, it's been a hard morning for all of us. Why don't you give us a song?"

"Without a tambourine? It's no good. Only if you play the piano."

So I go over to the piano, and Nidia, rehearsing to herself, decides on her "best" song: "This Little Light of Mine." For me, the song brings back something very different—the spirit of hopeful civil-rights marches long gone, but Nidia, being Pentecostal, knows it from church, and even without a tambourine, she sings, claps, and gestures with mounting, hypnotic, evangelical urgency.

Hide it under a bushel, oh no!
I'm gonna let it shine
Hide it under a bushel, oh no!
I'm gonna let it shine
Hide it under a bushel, oh no!
I'm gonna let it shine
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

UNDER the bushels: Cliff has lived in several foster homes and has been found unmanageable by each of them because of his frequent screaming attacks, temper tantrums, fights, and consistent day and night soiling. He began to make suicide attempts: climbing on roofs and high window ledges, he believed he was Superman and was caught by a neighbor just as he was ready to "fly."

Ralphie, who lives with his aunt and uncle and their five children, was always threatening to kill his younger cousins. Recently, he hurled the TV set at the three-year-old, injuring him badly. Ralphie has both visual and auditory hallucinations.

Nidia's earliest memory is of being locked in the refrigerator by her mother. Most likely, this did not happen, but enough other things did: she was sexually molested and often beaten by her stepfather. Nidia has very severe asthma, which has not responded to medical treatment, and is considered, in her case, to be a psychosomatic illness.

Randi was adopted on the "gray" market, and her adoptive parents were displeased with her almost from the beginning. She kept breaking things in the house, twice set fire to her room, and has frequently run away. During her most recent disappearance, she was hit by a car as she was running wildly, blindly across a massive suburban highway.

Much later that afternoon, way after Snack and Gym, after lunch and math, and after the pizza has been baked and eaten we go to the library—a smallish room at the end of the hall. Randi is pulling out books and making faces and noises at each of them, Ralphie, with the uneasy help of the librarian, is looking for a cookbook that will tell Miss Kaplan how to make "big pizza, giant pizza, pizza—*you* know—not like you buying in a store, but real big, real fat," and Nidia has taken out a picture book about France, looking up frequently and excitedly: she's hoping some teen-agers will come in. I am sitting at a small table with Cliff and a new boy, Eric, who has recently moved to New York from a ranch in Arizona. The two of them, both so small and so absurdly poster-charming in their differences—Cliff with his burgeoning Afro, and Eric with his Boy Scout-blonde hair and invisible eyebrows—are sitting together in one large chair, turning the pages of a *National Geographic*. I am doing absolutely nothing: staring into space.

"Miss Kaplan, what's this?" Cliff asks, pointing to a picture in the magazine. "What are they doing?"

The photograph is of a South American Indian tribe who have evolved an apparently unusual method for trapping animals. It seems to consist of camouflaged nets strung across the upper branches of high trees; there are also connecting ground traps amid the brush, and tribesmen with pointed sticks and fierce expressions who are swaying, climbing, and jumping. Woozily, I read the accompanying print, trying to figure out exactly what it is they *are* doing, but before I can answer, Eric does.

"Probably they're trying to die, most people want to."

"Most people do," Cliff nods. "Probably everyone."

ON MY way home, the bus I take is once again filled up with school-children. They push, scream, discuss homework, suck candies, and giggle continuously. Their noise is intolerable; I feel that I hate them, and watching them get off the bus, licking up their Milky Ways and Yankee Doodles, I cannot help wondering, envying, what they all so giddily step off to.

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Founders & Fur Traders

Louis Berg

On September 30, 1847, when the founding father of Montgomery, Alabama, cradle city of the Southern Confederacy, had reached his ninetieth year, he was visited by a reporter for the Montgomery *Flag and Advertiser,* Albert James Pickett, who was later to write the official history of the State of Alabama. Pickett found the old man living alone in an abandoned Indian hut on the outskirts of the city. Once a man of property—not only had he founded Montgomery but he had also introduced the first cotton gin into the county—he was now a pauper, dependent upon neighbors for his sustenance. A coffin, built by his own hands, stood by his bedside. The only other furnishings Pickett noted in the hut were two crude chairs, an old chest, a few bottles suspended by strings from the ceiling, and a rough table, on which rested a Hebrew Bible. His name was Abraham Mordecai and he was a Jew.

Pickett was at first quite taken with the old gentleman and described him as alert and intelligent despite his advanced years. Later, however, when he came to write his history, Pickett revised his favorable opinion. "Old Mordecai," as he had come to be known, was now "a Jew of amorous disposition, living among border ruffians and carrying on with Indian squaws in approved border style." Moreover, wrote Pickett, "Mordecai had married an Indian woman . . . tainted with the blood of Ham."

Undoubtedly, Mordecai's life had its shady aspects. Little is known of his early background. He was born in Pennsylvania and had probably traded there with the Indians before the Revolution. For three years he fought with the Continental Army, and as soon as he was mustered out, he went south to Alabama to establish a trading post among the Coosarda Indians at a place called Buzzard's Roost, which soon became the rendezvous for English deserters, horse thieves, smugglers, and other questionable characters. From there, Mordecai traded for peltries, pinkroot, and medicinal herbs, which he transported with the help of two Indians by packhorse to Pensacola and Augusta, and by barge and canoe to Mobile and New Orleans. On occasions he penetrated deep into Chicksaw country in search of furs and he is credited with having helped to ransom some white captives from the hands of the Creeks. For some years he got along well with the Indians, marrying an Indian woman, by whom he had two children —he subscribed to the then popular theory that the Indians were descended from the Ten Lost Tribes.

In 1805, however, Mordecai had a falling-out with Chief Towerculla of the Coosardas for reasons that are not clear. The version accepted by Pickett was that Mordecai had been "messing around" with one of the chief's women. Mordecai's story was that his horse had strayed into Towerculla's fields and eaten the corn. If true, the punishment far exceeded the offense. Towerculla and his men descended upon Mordecai's trading post, stove in his boats, burned down his house, beat him into insensibility, and as a parting gesture, cut off his left ear. Mordecai was left for dead, but his faithful Indian wife nursed him back to health. His trust in his supposed co-religionists, the Indians, was, however, shaken. He packed his remaining goods and fled to Georgia, where he joined General Floyd as a scout in the Autosee and Caleebee expeditions against the Indians. Later, when things had apparently calmed down, he returned to his old haunts.

All in all, "Old Mordecai" was perhaps not the most proper person to have nurtured the cradle city of the Confederacy. Nevertheless, some years after his death, the Montgomery *Evening Times* sought to give him his due. "Why not," an editorial suggested, "in the spirit of services rendered, in pride of the work of his hands securely laid, erect on Court, our most beautiful square, a monument to the name and memory of Old Mordecai, the cradle-rocker of Montgomery's infancy?" The suggestion, one regrets to report, was not taken up.

Astonishing though it may seem to some that a city like Montgomery should have been founded by a Jew, the fact is that Jews were present in the American colonies earlier and in far greater numbers than is commonly supposed. Nor was "Old Mordecai" the first Jew to engage in the Indian trade or to embrace rude frontier ways.

To tomahawk and wampum bred,
He's more than half a Cherokee.

This rollicking description, from a poem by David Garrick on his friend, Alexander Schoenberg, converted Jew and British sea captain, who saw much service in the French and Indian wars, could apply with equal force to many a Jewish merchant engaged during the 17th and 18th centuries in the Indian fur trade.

Primacy here is a difficult thing to establish. The safest procedure to follow was laid down by Jacob Marcus, the indefatigable archivist of American Jewish history: "The careful historian soon comes to the unfailing rule that no Jew was ever the first in town: there was always one before him." Thus, the twenty-three refugees who were uncere-

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moniously deposited by the French ship *St. Charles* upon the reluctant hospitality of the Dutch in New Amsterdam in 1654—their landing is commonly regarded as marking the founding of the American-Jewish community—had been preceded by two other Jews, Jacob Barsimmon and Solomon Pietersen, and there is evidence that Jews had been trading with the Indians in New Holland even earlier. Be that as it may, the twenty-three newcomers of 1654 lost no time in seeking to enter the fur trade, which then constituted virtually the sole economy of New Holland, New Amsterdam being little more than an Indian trading post. In 1655 a group of Jews petitioned Peter Stuyvesant for the right to trade with the Indians on the South River (the Delaware) and at Fort Orange.

> The petitioners [Abraham de Lucena, Salvador d'Andrada, Jacob Cohen, and others] have from the honorable Lords the directors of the Incorporated West Indies Company, Masters and Patroons of this Province, received permission and consent to travel to and trade there like the other inhabitants and to enjoy the same liberties which are provided by the document here annexed. They request therefore, respectfully, that your Noble Worships will not prevent or hinder them therein, but will allow and consent that pursuant to your permission they may with other inhabitants of this Province travel to and trade in places within the jurisdiction of the Governor of the New Netherlands.

Stuyvesant denied the petition—he had not wanted the Jews in his colony in the first place—but the Company, with Jews influential on the Board in Amsterdam, overruled him. Meanwhile, without waiting for an answer to their appeal, the New Amsterdam Jews had already shipped goods to the advanced trading posts, and Stuyvesant gave grudging acknowledgment: "We have been informed that the suppliants have already embarked some goods thither so that they are now permitted to send two persons to trade with it, and when they have disposed of their goods to return hither." Israel Israel and Isaac Cordosa were the two who were chosen—a peppery pair for we soon find them at odds with the authorities on the Delaware, as witness the minutes of the Council in 1658:

> A treaty was made with the Indians on behalf of the community living at Fort Casimir, which they willingly consented to, and each subscribed to a subsidy with the exception of Israel Israel and Isaac Cordosa, who refused to give their consent and prepared to leave the river and give up their trade rather than to assist the good inhabitants in maintaining the peace of the highway.

Apparently the two Jewish traders won their point—whatever the issue—for we find them the following year not only pursuing their trade but engaged in further argument, this time with the captain of a Dutch sloop carrying their goods; they claimed the skipper had gotten drunk with his crew and run the ship ashore, and they refused to pay his bill.

When the ban was lifted, Jewish traders invaded the Delaware Valley in force, penetrating well into Pennsylvania some twenty-five years before William Penn established his colony there. It is safe to assume that every Jew in New Amsterdam was involved in the fur trade since retail trade was forbidden him. Even the famous Asser Levy, the first *shochet* in New Amsterdam—he set the precedent for full citizenship rights for Jews in the New World by his insistence on burgher rights—although listed as a butcher, had a trading post in Albany.

Generally speaking, the Jews fared better in the Delaware than in the Hudson Valley, where the patroon of Renssalaerswyck and the Dutch colonists conspired to make life difficult for them, as for all free traders. "It is possible," wrote Killian van Renssalaerswyck from Holland to his commissioner in Albany, "that the Company will throw open the beaver trade to some extent: if they do that, I do not intend, nor shall I allow, any but those of the Company, to whom I cannot forbid it, to trade furs in my colony; to private individuals I do not wish to permit it. With my own people, some discretion will have to be used, provided that they deliver skins to you at a reasonable price for my account." What the patroon considered reasonable was a 60-per-cent profit for himself on trading goods sold to his settlers against their wages, and up to 100 per cent on the sale of peltries received by him. The Albany settlers, too, were tough competitors. "If a Jew, who understands the art of getting along perfectly, were to settle among them, they would not fail to ruin him," wrote Peter Kalm, the Swedish traveler to the colonies.

At least one Jew besides Asser Levy, however, managed to break through the barriers. In 1670, Jacob Lucena wrote to Governor Edmund Andros as follows:

> . . . Your humble peticion'r hath been a dweller in the collony for the space of twenty-two years and upwards and hath . . . been a trader for himself for the space of eight years and upwards. . . .
>
> Y'r peticion'r therefore humbly prays y'r honour's pass to goe to Albany and Esopus to deale and trade. . . .

Lucena obtained his pass for the sum of twelve pounds, one shilling, but he ran into trouble with the authorities on another score—for making proffers, the charge read, to several women. He was fined twenty pounds, but on appeal the fine was cut in half on the curious grounds that he was a Jew. Whether this was an expression of philo-Semitism, not uncommon in the English colonies, or an inference that a Jew could not be expected to conduct himself in the manner of a Christian gentleman, cannot be ascertained. Later the fine was remitted altogether as a token of respect for Asser Levy, who interceded in Lucena's behalf.

THROUGHOUT the 17th century only two Jewish names appear among the traders licensed to operate out of New England, and in Maryland, only one, Joseph Lumbrozo "—ye Jew Doctor, late of Lisbone." In 1658, Lumbrozo received both his papers of *denizaction* (establishing his right to reside in the colony) and his license to trade with the Indians. He was, apparently, a man who did not hesitate to speak his mind, for he had earlier been

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committed for blasphemy, the penalty for which in Maryland was death (he was spared by a Cromwellian amnesty).

The 18th century, however, saw extensive activity on the part of Jewish traders in the English colonies. In 1714, Lewis Moses Gomez established an outpost along the Hudson at a point where Indian trails converged on their ceremonial grounds, known to the Dutch as the *Danskammer* or Dance Chamber, in what is now Orange County. The house he built there for himself and his sons is the oldest standing Jewish house in the United States. His sons, Daniel and David, followed him in the fur trade. Another Albany trader, Hayman Levy, among other things, gave John Jacob Astor his start in the business: Levy's account books show him employing the future tycoon to beat furs for one dollar a day. Levy, at one time the largest fur dealer in the English colonies, enjoyed an excellent reputation for honesty and fair dealing. When Fort William Henry was under siege by Montcalm, and Albany seemed threatened, Levy transferred not only his own goods but those of fellow traders to the safety of New York. At one time he owned or outfitted a number of privateers; later, when British restrictions put him out of the shipping business and he faced utter ruin, he paid his creditors in full and with interest. When the Revolution broke out he was in his sixties, but he joined the Fourth Battalion, Pennsylvania Militia, as a private.

By the middle of the 18th century, the center of the American fur trade had shifted again, from the Hudson to the Ohio Valley. Jewish traders could claim to have anticipated the movement westward. As early as 1641 a certain Mathias de Sousa led a party to trade with the Susquehanna Indians. Three Jews of Portuguese descent, John Pedro, Manuel and Silvado Rodriguez, were in Lancaster County in 1652. In 1710, Isaac Miranda, "late of Tuscany," settled at Conoy Creek to trade with the Indians. He was described by James Logan as "an apostate Jew or fashionable Christian." Miranda died in 1733 but his son, George, carried on in his pioneering spirit, joining that year with the Levy brothers, Nathan and Isaac, in an expedition to western Pennsylvania to trade with the Mingoes and the Shawnees. Joseph Simon, who was to become the wealthiest of the Pennsylvania traders, arrived in Lancaster in 1735: it is he who is credited also with being one of the founders of Louisville, Kentucky. Aaronsburg, Pennsylvania, was named after Aaron Levy, a prominent Indian trader. Meyer Hart was one of the ten original settlers of Easton, Pennsylvania.

These were not isolated instances. In 1723 Jews were reported to have arrived in Tulpehocken Creek with some German settlers from Schaharsie, New York. Friedrich Sachse, in his book, *German Sectarians of Pennsylvania,* wrote with some bitterness of the Jewish influence on the New Denkers, who observed the seventh day as their Sabbath, circumcised their children, and refused to eat pork. He attributed these Hebraic observances to the effect of Jewish traders "who came without their families, with no intent to settle but purely to barter"—but in this last he was surely mistaken, as witness the "Journal of the Treaty with the Six Nations" in which the English commissioners who prepared it make reference to "a number of Jewish settlers and Jewesses, not long come from New York, who were residing in Lancaster County." By the middle of the 18th century, sizable numbers of Jews could be found in the Pennsylvania towns of Reading, York, Easton, Schaefferstown, Heidelberg, and Lancaster—all border communities.

At the same time, wealthy Jewish shipowners and merchants of Philadelphia and New York, their ships laid up because of British restrictions, turned to the Indian trade in the Ohio Valley and soon began to dominate it. The principal trading companies were the consortium formed by David Franks, Joseph Simon, and Colonel William Trent; the house of Barnard and Michael Gratz; and the Quaker firm of Bayton, Wharton, and Morgan. These were not stock companies but shifting partnerships based on expediency or organized around specific expeditions into the fur country. On various occasions independent traders, like the Lowrey Brothers or George Croghan, were associated with Jewish firms. Business was conducted in true frontier fashion—there was never a contract between Levy Andrew Levy and Major Alexander Lowrey in more than forty years of frequent association, and when the time came to settle their accounts, the transaction was conducted with the two of them sitting on a log alongside a creek. When Lowrey fell on hard times because of losses incurred during the French and Indian Wars, Simon waived interest on a mortgage he held on Lowrey's plantation, as did David Franks on a note he held. And when Croghan, known as the "Prince of Pennsylvania Traders," was utterly ruined, it was to Michael Gratz that he turned for aid. Gratz supplied him with money, food, and clothing, and remitted all debts in exchange for land grants already of dubious value.

David Franks was prominent not only in the Indian trade but in Philadelphia society as well and was a member of the exclusive "Assembly," whose annual ball was the social event of the season. He seems to have been a man of divided and tortured loyalties in both politics and religion. Franks married out of the faith and encouraged his children to become Christians, but to the end of his days he contributed to the support of the Shearith Israel synagogue in New York. Because the social-climbing Franks maintained friendships not only with Whiggish gentlemen but also with British officers stationed in Philadelphia, he was accused of Tory sympathies after the Revolution and forced at one time to leave for London, though he was later cleared and permitted to return. The charge of Toryism was not without a certain irony, inasmuch as it was one of his ships, the *Myrtilla,* which transported the Liberty Bell to America.

The Gratz brothers were no less firmly entrenched in Philadelphia society, but unlike Frank, their Jewish commitments were of a deeper sort. Barnard Gratz, whose

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portrait, painted by Sully, shows a modish Colonial gentleman, learned in the absence of a ritual slaughterer to butcher his own meat in the prescribed traditional manner, though later he trained a young apprentice, Joseph Etting, whose father was one of the first of the Pennsylvania fur traders, to perform the task for him. His brother, Michael, on one of many excursions into Indian country, carried kosher meat (salted) in his pack train. Michael was the younger brother, who before arriving in the colonies had a reputation as a *ne'er-do-well: he had gone off on a* wild voyage to India in quest of pearls and had unforgivably returned empty-handed to the family home in Silesia. Barnard, who was already prospering in the colonies, sent for him with some misgivings. "This place," he warned, "requires honesty, industry, good-nature, and no pride, for one must do anything pertaining to business." "Anything" comprised a little smuggling—"the trade offers quick and good returns, with the assistance of the great run," he wrote—but then smuggling was not regarded as much of a crime in the colonies.

Michael, as it turned out, proved his worth in the Indian trade, making frequent trips to Indian country while Barnard, for the most part, conducted the shipping end of the business from Philadelphia. Michael married the daughter of Joseph Simon, a trustworthy citizen—"a worthy and honest Jew," in Reverend Thomas Barton's words—who conducted his trading transactions on the border with a fine disregard for the social graces; it is reported that he had the disconcerting habit of entering people's houses without knocking.

It must not be presumed that the elegant Jewish merchants of Philadelphia restricted their business activities to the snug confines of their counting houses. The exigencies of the fur trade—it was all too easy for an agent to abscond and blame the loss on Indian raiding parties—often made it imperative for the merchant to travel with his goods. Francis Parkman, in his *Conspiracy of Pontiac,* gives the following description of the operation:

> The chief thoroughfare from the middle colonies was from Philadelphia westward across the Alleghenies to the valley of the Ohio. . . . merchandise was sometimes carried in wagons as far as the site of Fort Pitt. From this point the goods were packed on the backs of horses which . . . climbed the shadowy heights of the Alleghenies and threaded the forests of the Ohio. The principal trader, the owner of the merchandise, would fix his headquarters in some large Indian town, where he would dispatch his correspondence to the surrounding villages with a suitable supply of blankets, guns and hatchets, liquor, tobacco, . . . beads, and hawkbells. . . .

Thus we find Simon at Fort Pitt, Jacob Franks (David's father) in Green Bay, Levy Andrew Levy at Presque Isle, Hyman Levy at Fort William Henry, Emanuel Joseph at Michilimackinac, Gershon Levy at Detroit, and others at Three Rivers, Sandusky, and points beyond—all the way to the Illinois and Mississippi, and this when the whole frontier was inflamed.

THE Seven Years' War (1755-63), waged in North America solely for the control of the fur trade, created a no-man's-land between the French and the English in which neither man nor merchandise could safely journey. To the ordinary hazards of the wilderness were now added the perils of war and the depradations of hostile Indians. The Jewish fur trader was subject to particular dangers; he never knew when he might find himself in the shifting frontier caught in traditionally antagonistic French-Catholic territory, from which he was barred by edict. Nor could supposedly friendly Indians be trusted; allegiances shifted with the changing tides of war, and unfortunate indeed was the trader who found himself trapped between the contending forces. Washington's surrender of Fort Necessity and the even more calamitous defeat of Braddock's Redcoats brought panic to the border communities and ruin to the traders who resided there. Prosperity returned when the French finally surrendered huge areas they had held for one hundred and fifty years, but it was of short duration. Soon the traders were in trouble deeper than the war had created.

Traditionally, the traders had enjoyed good relations with the Indians. To the settler the trader might be a villain who supplied the redskins with the rum that inflamed their murderous passions and the arms used to massacre peaceful villagers. But in truth, the Indians—who in their raids relied more on the element of surprise than on their outmoded rifles—needed the weapons to hunt furs; the Indian never learned to *be a trapper and, surprisingly, was* a poor archer. To the Indian, therefore, the trader was a bringer of precious gifts in exchange for what were to him often worthless peltries—the trade preferred worn furs because of their superior sheen. Frequently, a blood-brother relationship existed between trader and Indian, sealed by an exchange of clothes and maintained through years of close association.

The Pontiac Conspiracy (1763-65) and Cresap's War (1774), the latter provoked by the slaughter of peaceful Indians, changed all that. The encroachment on Indian lands by the settlers and the broken promises of colonial authorities inflamed the red man more than rum, and converted every white man into an enemy. Lulled into false security by the British conquests of French territory and by the amicable relationships of the past, hundreds of traders were trapped in the fortified outposts taken by the Indians through storm or duplicity—only Detroit survived the sieges of the Pontiac confederacy. To be sure, warnings had been issued, but they were ignored. "These lands," wrote Colonel Bouquet, "have been overrun by a number of vagabonds who, under the pretense of hunting, were making settlements in various parts . . . of which the Indians made grievous and repeated complaints." He was a fine one to talk, having proposed to Lord Amherst that blankets impregnated with smallpox be distributed among the Indians! A better friend, David Franks, in a letter to Lord Dunmore, warned of evil consequences "from the great number of irregular and lawless emigrants that are . . . seat-

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ing themselves upon the land of the natives without having obtained their consent . . . which irregular and unlicensed encroachment might very probably be productive of the Indian insurrections. . . ."

The Jewish traders, by all accounts, enjoyed exceptionally good relations with the Indians but they did not emerge unscathed. William Murray, Irish agent for the Gratz brothers, wrote to Barnard in Philadelphia: "Thirty-eight to forty Indians have been killed by white people on the Ohio, but the intelligence is only verbal. Not a word from J. Simons or any other person at Fort Pitt. If this intelligence is true, it would be much against us and would greatly endanger my scalp." The news was all too true. Simon was one of a group of twenty-three traders led by Lowrey whose pack train was attacked by Indians at Bloody Run: they escaped with their lives but lost all their goods. Of a consortium of five Jewish traders operating out of Montreal, four were captured by the Indians, but they either escaped or were ransomed.

Caprice ruled the fate of all Indian captives: hair's-breadth escapes were common. Levy Solomon is mentioned in the Amherst papers as a "New York trader who managed to make his escape from Detroit after being held by the Indians for some time." Gershon Levy was captured along with two other traders and he, too, escaped, but nothing is known of what happened to his companions. Not all of the traders were lucky. The Reverend John Heckenwelder, in his *Narrative of a Journey in the Wabash,* tells of a Jewish trader named Jacobs, intercepted by hostile Indians while on his way to Saginaw: "Jacobs shot dead one of the gang after being mortally wounded himself." Andrew Levy—not to be confused with Levy Andrew Levy—was killed by Indians. The story of Chapman Adams, who appears in Heckenwelder's *Narrative,* belongs to the legends of Indian warfare. He was twice a prisoner, the first capture being reported in Major Robert's *Siege of Detroit:*

> . . . They have taken Chapman and his merchandise, as also a canoe with five Englishmen coming from Sandusky yesterday; among whom were Smallman and two Jews, who must have fallen into worse hands if they had not taken them, as they have not killed any of them. They desired to know what opinion the commandant had of them; and if he would make peace with them they would give up their prisoners and pay Chapman for that part of the merchandise that fell to their lot in the division of them with other Indians.

On the second occasion, as reported by Heckenwelder:

> . . . the unfortunate man was betrayed by a false friend and again fell into the power of the Indians, who took him across the river to be burned and tortured, tied to a stake with a fire burning by his side. His thirst, from the great heat, became unbearable and he begged that some drink might be given him. It is a custom among the Indians, previous to the prisoner being put to death, to give him what they call his last meal. A bowl of pottage or broth was therefore brought to him for that purpose. Eager to quench his thirst, he put the bowl immediately to his lips. . . and was dreadfully scalded. Being a man of quick temper, he threw the bowl with its contents full into the face of the Indian who brought it to him.

His captives, as the story goes, decided he was mad and therefore under divine guidance; they spared his life and later released him for ransom.

The defeat of the French, the crushing of the Indian uprisings, opened up vast areas of the interior, extended the borders to the Mississippi, and introduced a fresh orgy of land speculation in which the Lees and the Washingtons of Virginia (through the Ohio Company) had long been involved. The Pennsylvania traders now became their rivals, through the Illinois Company. Of the twenty-two shareholders of the Illinois Company, eight were Jews and a ninth, Dr. Alexander Hamilton, had married into the Gratz family. Isaac Isaac hired Daniel Boone to obtain land for him in Kentucky—the record of the transaction still exists—and Michael Gratz purchased the region on which the Mammoth Caves now stand. The traders saw in their land acquisitions an extension of the fur trade, but the rush of "illegal" settlers swamped their holdings. Few profited ultimately from the land deals, or indeed from the fur trade in general. When the trade was in a shambles, Jewish traders turned to supplying the armies in conflict; they became sutlers first for the British forces and later for the Continental Army. This, too, was a treacherous business. The Continental Army paid badly when at all, and Haym Salomon was not the only Jewish businessman who lent money to the rebels without recompense.

Nevertheless, the Jewish traders of Pennsylvania seem to have survived the successive blows to their business better than their Gentile counterparts. The Lowrey Brothers and Croghan, for all of their political connections, had to turn to Jews in the end for aid and the firm of Boynton, Wharton, and Morgan failed—they were forced to sell their goods to David Franks for the sum of 10,000 pounds. The Jews were either more resourceful or more adaptable and survived the debacle. Michael Gratz moved to Virginia, where he was involved in the outfitting of privateers and in an ambitious but abortive plan to drain the Dismal Swamp. Solomon Etting, whose son used to slaughter meat for the Gratzes, prospered to such an extent that he was able to write to Robert Fulton with a proposal to build a steam-driven man-of-war. Simon, who lived to be ninety-two, remained a wealthy patriarch to the end of his days. Michael Gratz also lived to a ripe and prosperous old age; he helped finance the Rogers Clark expedition of 1781, the purpose of which was to find new lands for the pursuit of furs.

When the Ohio Valley fur trade came to an end so, for all practical purposes, did the Indian trade and the Jewish role in it. Thereafter, the emphasis passed to the trapper along the Wide Missouri and to the huge trading companies whose operations more or less excluded the private trader. But that is another story.

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The world watched in horror. One man saw and heard it all.

PRAGUE NOTEBOOK:

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By Michel Salomon

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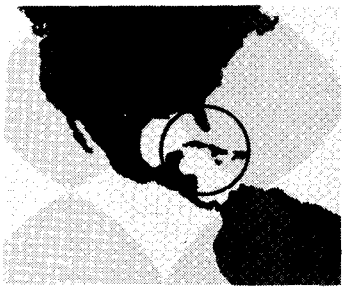

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Aquarius Rising

OF A FIRE ON THE MOON. By NORMAN MAILER. *Little, Brown. 472 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by JOHN P. SISK

IN A sense, this book was the inevitable next move for a writer who, having pitted himself against the likes of the late Sonny Liston, the Pentagon, Lyndon Johnson, and the mayor of Chicago, found himself running out of sufficiently testing opposition. One may imagine that part of the challenge was the fact that the landing of the first men on the moon might appear on the one hand to be too easy a subject—too well established in the public mind as a history-making event and therefore likely to be quickly relegated to history—and on the other hand too protected against searching examination by public rhetoric. In any event, it is the report on his latest safari by an established big-game hunter, this time through the Africa of space and beyond that into the heart of darkness; appropriately, therefore, it begins with a reference to that other great hunter, Hemingway, whose suicide left the author "wedded to horror" and hounded for eight years with death thoughts.

To put it this way may be to suggest that here again we have what Alfred Kazin has called "the charged-up consciousness of self that has become an insistent fact in our writing." Certainly the standard autobiographical credentials of this consciousness are in *Of a Fire on the Moon*: for the author it has been a bad decade, bracketed between the stabbing of his second wife and the failure to get decently off the launching pad in his effort to become mayor of New York City; he is in debt from his excursions into movie-making; he is not happy to be overpraised as a journalist at the expense of being undervalued as a novelist; his fourth marriage is collapsing; he is forty-six and gaining weight. Besides, it is immediately obvious that the important thing is not the moonshot but the author's state of mind as he encounters it. Nevertheless, he is convinced that he is "detached this season from the imperial demands of his ego" and therefore "in superb shape to study the flight of Apollo 11 to the moon." I think he is mainly right. Perhaps it is because the charged-up consciousness has this time come close to meeting its match so that the imperial ego has been driven into humility. No doubt the thought of Hemingway helped: who has not been driven by the thought of Hemingway into humility?

But craft helps too. In a *Paris Review* interview some years ago Mailer had hard things to say about craft, referring to it as one of those "enormous evasions" that is "fatal for somebody who has a large ambition and a chance of becoming a great writer." No doubt this is true enough from the point of view of the imperial ego, which sees craft as lusting against it, and it is why the imperial Ahab in *Moby Dick* throws away the quadrant so that he must sail by dead reckoning. But you do not rocket to the moon, even on Mailer's terms, by dead reckoning; ultimately, as he recognizes in this more humble mood, the effort to get beyond craft is self-destructive. Without this awareness the book would have failed, even as the moonshot itself would have failed without the coordination of crafts that so fascinates the author.

There is, for instance, the important but by now familiar strategy by means of which the first person assumes the disguise of the third person in order to back away from himself. So Mailer becomes Aquarius, his horoscopic alter ego (Aquarius, old Waterbearer: eccentric, unpredictable, loving to shock, advocate of brotherhood, friendship, and the higher love). It is a useful way to put down the imperial ego, to force it with humor and irony to work for, not against one. Then there is the excellent twice-over craft of the large design. We begin with the Manned Spacecraft Center at Houston, meet its executives, are introduced to astronauts Armstrong, Aldrin, and Collins and speculate about their psychology; next move across country to Cape Kennedy to tour the installation and mingle with the midsummer festival of the launch; then return to Houston to follow the flight to and landing on the moon. At this point, history having plainly been made, we head home to Provincetown, somewhat appalled to note that two thirds of a long book remains and to learn that we are about to return to the launching pad and do it all over again. But crafty Aquarius, disguised now as super-engineer, is able to bring it off, for at this point the best is yet to come.

AN IMPORTANT factor in Aquarius's reporting is that he is blood-brother to Melville's Ishmael. The first direct reference to *Moby Dick* occurs on page 100, after which point it is clearly indicated in only three or four more passages. Nevertheless, it seems to me that Aquarius's mind is haunted by the memory of that greatest reporter of American moonshots. Aquarius's inspection of the Vehicle Assembly Building and his observation that seeing the interior of a Saturn V rocket "was like looking into the abdominal cavity of a submarine or whale" recalls Ishmael's inspection of the skeleton of the mighty whale as he finds it embowered on a South Pacific island. Aquarius pondering in a superb chapter the bond

JOHN P. SISK, *professor of English at Gonzaga University in Spokane, contributed "Sex and Armageddon" to our December 1970 number.*

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between the iron of astronauts and the magnet-compelling iron of the stars might be Ishmael bemused with the "linked analogies" that unite a Catskill eagle with a pagan harpooner. When Aquarius asks, "Who could say the ride of the Indian with whisky in his veins was not some conflagration of messages derived from the silences of the moon?" he is no less serious than Ishmael when he associates the mystic markings on the whale's body with the hieroglyphics of the pyramids. Both assume that the true *gestalt* of an event is available only to the charged-up romantic imagination acting as co-creator of reality in a universe adapted more to the metaphor than the computer.

In such a universe there is no end to linked analogies. It follows that in both works every ascertainable fact about the particular moonshot is significant. Each has to be encyclopedic. The result in *Moby Dick* is that cetology (zoology of whales) so likely to bore readers who are unable to be at home in Ishmael's world. By the same token, if the Apollo 11 moonshot has the meaning for you that it has for Theodore Roszak (see his essay in *New American Review*, No. 9), then Aquarius's "cetology" may seem to be nothing more than self-indulgent virtuosity. In Aquarius's view, however, the moonshot must be understood in engineering detail before it can be understood in any context. What he has provided, then, for those who can accept his Ishmaelean assumptions, is an incomparable guidebook for the watching of moonshots—indeed, what could turn out to be more important, for the watching of any technological process. At the same time, he has accepted the implied challenge of the Space Program, and by bringing off a superior moonshot has demonstrated a way to survive in the presence of apparently irresistible power. And since the Program communicates its moonshot with jargon and banalities ("Let us try to comprehend how man can be so bold yet inhabit such insulations of cliché"), Aquarius's own moonshot must be a triumph of language.

An important possibility for Aquarius is that there may be a psychology of machines—a thought no more acceptable to Wernher von Braun than to Theodore Roszak. It is hard to know what finally to make of Aquarius on this subject (though one should remember that he admits to being something of a Manichee). This much, however, is clear: machines often do act as if they had a psychology; to represent them as so acting is not only to rebuke the Pelagian hubris of technologists but to use a poet's tactic to underline the irreducible mystery of reality; to suspect them of a psychology (Aquarius's cunning pathetic fallacy?) is to heighten the essential drama of the astronauts' situation. In any event, Ishmael, who could suspect not only the whale but the entire universe of a psychology, would have no problem here.

NOR, I suspect, would he fail to understand Aquarius's complex attitude toward the WASP, since he was himself caught up in a WASP enterprise. Aquarius's WASP is clearly enough in the enemy camp, but here even more than in *Miami and the Siege of Chicago* he is aware that liberal pieties can be as crippling to a reporter as WASP banalities. Therefore "jokes at the expense of Nixon usually bored him" as did those liberals "who thought politics was equal to loathing Nixon." Perhaps one should see a combination of honesty and craft here: the moonshot viewed from the perspective of any piety, liberal or anti-technological, may not only be predictably dull but so partial as to result in dishonest reporting. There is never, of course, any doubt about where his heart is. Hence the dramatic force of his wrathful explosion at the end of the book (he has built up to it as to the pratfall of a villain) against "himself and all the friends of his generation and the generations which have followed" who, while the WASP was moving from command of the world to command of the moon, "had used their years drinking deep into grass and all the mind illuminants beyond the grass, princelings on the trail of the hip, so avid to deliver the sexual revolution that they had virtually strained at the lips of the great gate."

SO THERE is no peace for Aquarius, caught as he is between the infuriating but still loved princelings of the hip and the admired but feared princelings of Apollo 11. The recurring and structural question is "whether the Space Program was the noblest expression of the Twentieth Century or the quintessential statement of our fundamental insanity." At the end he is no closer to an answer than he was at the beginning; he has simply dramatized the question in all its urgency and in the richest context he could manage. I confess I am as uneasy with it, once I am outside the magic circle of the book, as I am with the operatic either-or's of the radical Right. Early in his voyage he observes with irony that "ideas were what Americans cared about, and the biggest ideas were doubtless the best." But is there not a familiar element of American megalomania in the assumption that the consequences of the Space Program must be supremely good or supremely bad? Unless we insist on such giant-size formulations, as if no other kind were worthy of us, why may not the Space Program be imagined as producing the usual mixed bag, failing no less to satisfy the hopes of Pelagian technologists than the fears of Manichean novelists?

At any rate, there is little in the book to support this unspectacular though not especially happy alternative; indeed, to have entertained it seriously might have been harmful to the book, the temper of which could hardly endure such a banal possibility. Ishmael, who works with a similar structural question—whether Ahab's furious pursuit of the diabolized whale is heroic absolutism or appalling madness—is in the end, I believe, less confined in his choices, perhaps because he has learned to contemplate mighty opposites with some measure of what he calls the "equal eye." Aquarius's eye, still somewhat bloodshot from the imperial pressure, is not yet that equal.

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Return to Judaism

PAGANISM-CHRISTIANITY-JUDAISM: A CONFESSION OF FAITH. By MAX BROD. Translated from the German by WILLIAM WOLF. *University of Alabama Press. 274 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by ARTHUR A. COHEN

IN HIS essay, "Apologetic Thinking" (1923)—prompted by the publication of the original German editions of Max Brod's *Paganism-Christianity-Judaism* (1921) and Leo's Baeck's *The Essence of Judaism* (1922)—Franz Rosenzweig noted the peculiar predicament of the Jewish apologist. Apologetics, he observed, is a more precarious activity for its Jewish practitioners than for any others. The Jewish thinker, according to Rosenzweig, is never a wholly pure thinker; if the vital center of his life is as a Jew, then his thought is ultimately confessional, whatever pretense it may make to objectivity and universality.

Certainly this is true of Max Brod in *Paganism-Christianity-Judaism,* a mystical-philosophic, rhetorical-apologetic work that, not by accident, bears the subtitle "A Confession of Faith"—as any "Jewish" book inevitably must. For a Jew who writes about Judaism is first of all constrained to signify what kind of Jew he is, where he stands on the Jewish spectrum, what tags of Jewish identification stick to his flesh. Only when we know all this can we begin to follow his argument, to estimate the relevance and immediacy of his apologia. Under these circumstances, the question of empirical truth is avoided, for truth is consigned to the realm of subjectivity, and what is offered up as truth by the confessor is at best the verisimilitude of his own experience. Checking his "truth" against our own, we find we are left with very little unless this subjective truth has been wrested from combat with large and enduring questions. In the end we judge the integrity of the confessor no less than the value of the confession. It is scarcely bearable to read a confession by an anonymous author.

Who then was the Max Brod who wrote *Paganism-Christianity-Judaism*? Although he is perhaps best known in this country for his 1937 biography of *hommage* to his close friend Franz Kafka—published here in translation in 1947—Brod had come to eminence more than thirty years earlier, as poet, novelist, composer, and discoverer of the music of Smetana and Janácek. Brod was a Czech Jew, or more precisely a Prague Jew, and a member of the famous *Prager Kreis*—that is to say, a Jew inhabiting a special cultural enclave. Deeply involved in Bohemian cultural enthusiasms, and employing German as the language of high culture, he was in close contact with Eastern European Jewry, yet nonetheless as-

ARTHUR A. COHEN'S A People Apart: Hasidic Life in America *(with photographs by Philip Garvin) has recently been published (Dutton).*

. . . no real test of pacification's ultimate impact may ever be feasible.
Robert Komer

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Eqbal Ahmad

(quotations from the current issue)

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saulted by the currents of assimilative Judaism; responsive to the conscience calls of his older contemporary Martin Buber, yet withal a littérateur, an aesthete, and a "modest, gentle, helpful man," as Stefan Zweig called him (in the preface to *The Redemption of Tycho Brahe*, 1928).

In *Paganism-Christianity-Judaism* Brod was struggling to formulate the principles of his return to Judaism, and like all literary men who undergo conversions he could not keep quiet about the experience—its pains, its difficulties, even its embarrassments. Sometimes such tales make for edifying reading, sometimes not. *Paganism-Christianity-Judaism*, in all truth, was a flawed work from the start, though not without a certain strength and intensity, and it has not improved with the passage of time. On the contrary, now, a half century later, when the times are so vastly different, the work appears rather flabby. Nor has the present edition been served by the infelicitous translation and the absence of any kind of interpretive or historical introduction.

At any rate, the underlying problem of Brod's confessional apologia seems to be that of language. Brod, the literary man, is attempting a work of systematic thought, but he is obviously uncertain as to whether he can, or should even try to, bring off the task. In his ambivalence, he throws up his hands and declares that he is not a thinker, not a historian or theologian, but rather a man of feeling. Which would be perfectly proper had he restricted himself to the more informal modes of the novelist or the personal essayist. But Brod's intentions were of a more ambitious sort, so the work is burdened with all the heavy apparatus of the "serious" thinker—citations, historical allusions, and a plethora of inimitably German essences (the suffix *-tum* which turns every specific term into an abstraction). The result is more pretentious than scholarly.

THE Brod work is best understood as the product of a specific intellectual climate. In the years prior to World War I, the Jews of the Prague Circle were emboldened by Buber's *Three Lectures on Judaism* (delivered in Prague in 1911) to consider the grounds of their estrangement from Jewish life. For many the estrangement remained, somewhat shaken but intact, even in the aftermath of Buber's words. For others, like Brod, it became the central question. In those days what preoccupied German-Jewish intellectuals was not Jewish identity as such (the term was never used) but rather—as Robert Weltsch has noted in his splendid lecture on Max Brod*—*die persoenliche Judenfrage* ("the personal Jewish question"). It was the question of one's most intimate relations to the Jewish *objectivum*. In Brod's case, after he had accommodated himself to Socialist-Zionism, the question came to be formulated in terms of Jewish spirituality. The question of the Jews as a political entity—the people without a land—was succeed by the question of legitimation—the claim of the people not merely to a *place* but to a *time* as well.

In *Paganism-Christianity-Judaism* Brod developed a distinction upon which his whole personality would come to rest. There are, he argued, two essential conditions of man: noble misfortune *(edles unglueck)* and ignoble misfortune *(unedles unglueck)*. Noble misfortune is the condition of man before God as a creature of limit and contingency, who depends upon Him for mercy and surcease from his metaphysical bondage. Ignoble misfortune is the hell man makes of creation, his willful, obtuse, wicked blighting of the universe. Before this binary condition man may choose to retire into hermetic contemplation of God, piercing the separating veil with prayer and devotion, seeking out the freely bestowed grace which will restore him to that wholeness which no amount of right action by itself can achieve. Such retirement has been the choice of Christianity which forsakes the world and holds fast to a spurious acosmism which combines pagan illusions about eternity and immorality with the ransoming redemption of Jesus Christ. The Jew, however, is not similarly impelled. "Noble misfortune" does not make him unresponsive to the challenge set before him by poverty, war, conflict, misery—the "ignoble misfortunes" which man has created and for which man alone is responsible. Judaism believes in the "this-worldly miracle," and the Jew is obliged constantly to strive for such realization. Brod worked his way back into the center of Jewish life and thought not by following the gleamings of grace and the longings for redemption, but by pursuing the hard path of the ethical task.

Paganism-Christianity-Judaism may fail to impart any new truths but it can hardly fail to persuade us of the authenticity of the confessor and of the value his confession had for the ordering of his own life. The book was of crucial importance in the life of its author and, because of Brod's eminence and influence in his time, important to many others as well. For us, however, the problem may simply be that its argument comes too late.

* *Max Brod and His Age*, Leo Baeck Institute, New York, 1970.

Magical Mystery Tour

FAMILIES AGAINST THE CITY: MIDDLE-CLASS HOMES OF INDUSTRIAL CHICAGO, 1872-1890. By RICHARD SENNETT. *Harvard University Press. 258 pp. $8.50.*

THE USES OF DISORDER: PERSONAL IDENTITY AND CITY LIFE. By RICHARD SENNETT. *Knopf. 198 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by MELVYN DUBOFSKY

RICHARD SENNETT, whose works and ideas have come in for enthusiastic attention in recent months, would seem to propound a thesis whose essence had already been broadcast—and with far greater succinctness—by the Beatles: ". . . yesterday, love was

MELVYN DUBOFSKY, *a new contributor, is professor of history at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee and the author of, most recently,* We Shall Be All: A History of the IWW.

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such an easy game to play,/Now I need a place to hide away—/Oh I believe in yesterday." More specifically, Sennett believes that the American middle class has been so badly frightened by the grim realities of modern urban-industrial life that, since the 1880's at least, it has desperately sought a hiding place, a sanctuary it located within the confines of the so-called nuclear family; moreover, prior to the retreat into the domestic fastness, life, according to Sennett, was more varied and rewarding.

Sennett sets forth these notions first in *Families Against the City*, which purports to analyze, "in historical fashion," the reasons, as he sees them, for the withdrawal into the family, a development he regards as an impediment to the proper handling of external social reality. Pursuing the theme in *The Uses of Disorder*, he then comes up with some measure of cure, suggesting that if our cities are to be made livable again a restructuring of the family and a return to elements of a previous order are called for. Unfortunately, Sennett's historical foundation is laid on scholarly quicksand and his remedy for the social disease he perceives in contemporary American society is in fundamental respects more dangerous than the illness he diagnoses. (It should be noted that a substantial portion of Sennett's history and his prescription for urban health are based on the sociological and psychological models of such masters of social science as Erik Erikson, Philippe Aries, and Talcott Parsons. Troubled as I am by what seems to me to be his ill-considered and strained use of several currently chic social-science approaches, I prefer to let others more "professional" in those fields take Sennett to task for this. I am simply reminded of the fable of the "Sorcerer's Apprentice," with Erikson as the master and Sennett as the apprentice—and we all know what happened when that unfortunate youth toyed with his master's magic.)

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over time of family units through manuscript census records and annual city directories, to derive rather unimpressive conclusions. For his purposes Sennett chooses to survey what he regards as a representative neighborhood, Chicago's Union Park, a once-fashionable, upper-class section fallen upon parlous times because of changes in the city's economic and demographic structure, and by the 1880's reduced to a shabby-genteel, lower-middle-class district. Working from a sample of the records of some 12,000 individuals and 1,000 fathers and sons, between the years 1872 and 1890, he derives the following data: Most Union Park residents lived in nuclear-family units, with few children per household. The children, particularly the males, first left home at a relatively advanced age; the men did not marry until they were earning an adequate income and hence tended to be considerably older than their wives. Social and occupational mobility between the generations was limited.

Now, there is very little that is striking or necessarily false in these findings. Other students of social mobility in 19th-century America, Stephan Thernstrom for example, have discovered similar trends. What is shocking, however, are the conclusions which Sennett draws from the raw material—conclusions, moreover, not established by the historical sources. Sennett, to accommodate his *Tendenz,* must prove that the nuclear family represents an unsuccessful adaptation to urban life and indeed provided only an illusory escape from the emerging industrial city. He must establish that the rise of such family units was responsible for the limited pace of social mobility and transformed the cities into wastelands. In order to do so, he concocts a mishmash made up of ill-assorted parts of Dreiser, Handlin, and Erikson. Unable to uncover the dynamics of everyday family life from city directories, Sennett presses into service Sister Carrie's Union Park relatives, the Hansons, to prove the joyless, circumscribed nature of lower-middle-class city life. Not taken into the master bedroom by the census records, Sennett states as hard fact several unproved, and most likely unfounded, assertions advanced by Oscar Handlin to the effect that middle-class families in late-Victorian America would not countenance "artificial" birth control and limited family size by regular abstention from sex. From this dreary picture of American family life, there emerges, as Erik Erikson's psychological model requires, that stock cartoon figure, the henpecked, suburban father-husband, whose occupational immobility and sexual frustration make him unable to prepare his children to cope with the now dominant urban society.

BECAUSE the vast majority of present-day Americans live under circumstances and in neighborhoods not significantly dissimilar from those of Sennett's Chicagoans of a century ago—so runs the argument in *The Uses of Disorder*—we can now better comprehend the crisis of our contemporary cities and take the appropriate remedial action. But history, I believe, teaches lessons at variance with Sennett's. For instance, the intense, female-dominated families he ascribes to the genteel, middle-class American way of life were perhaps as prominent among the immigrant working class. Certainly, the progeny of those storied, domineering, overprotective "Jewish mothers" were not unduly disadvantaged in the race for upward mobility. And only recently, one of my graduate students in England has called my attention to the positive role played by British working-class mothers in advancing the careers of their sons; the evidence exists not only in the more familiar writings of D. H. Lawrence but in a whole sub-species of literature dealing with working-class life. The "Jewish mother," it would seem, is a universal type.

Sennett is guilty of further historical distortion. Unhappy with the quality of current urban life, he retreats into a vision of a romanticized past ("I believe in yesterday"), claiming that life in the typical late-19th-century working-class slum possessed a variety and a sense of community lacking in

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the contemporary version. In his scenario of the past, men could escape their domineering wives and find companionship and fulfillment in saloons, at union meetings, in mutual-aid societies, etc. Slum children might attend bleak schools, but at three in the afternoon they would be released to find excitement in the life-pulsating streets. (In Sennett's rewriting of the past, children do not crouch over homework in filthy tenement flats, nor are they exploited by unscrupulous employers.) On these same streets and in the noisome tenements that sprouted from them, Sennett goes on, a variety of ethnic and religious groups rubbed shoulders and, despite occasional friction, never locked horns in unlimited violence. And over this exemplary domain there presided the old-fashioned, good-hearted city machine, offering what Sennett describes as "a good thing," a little humane graft. Those were the days. . . .

Let us now summon some actual witnesses to testify to the veracity of this roseate picture. First, Abraham Bisno, an immigrant Jew, describing his experiences in the very same Chicago that sends Sennett into raptures: "There was practically no sense of hospitality toward the Jews, and the opinion was common among the Jews that there they too were in *Golus*. Our neighbors hated us, and our lives and property were not safe."* Or Abraham Rosenberg, a socialist and president of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union, a man who had every reason to encourage ethnic cooperation. Here is what he has to say of neighborhood change in New York (1914): "The Jewish people who used to live there have run away on account of there are nothing there but Italians. No Jew wants to live there."† A third witness, a teen-age immigrant, working-class girl, laments: "Where

* Quoted in *Abraham Bisno, Union Pioneer,* University of Wisconsin Press, *1967,* p. 55.

† See my *When Workers Organize: New York City in the Progressive Era,* University of Massachusetts Press, 1968, p. 19.

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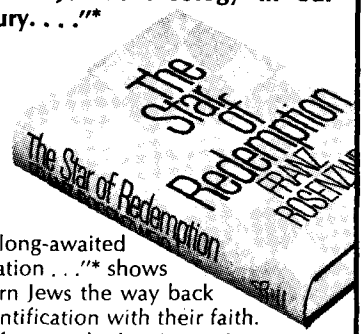

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* Albert Johnston, *Publishers' Weekly*

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was the time for the free schools, where was the time for the wonderful libraries, the luxurious museums? Where was the opportunity to rejoice in all the blessings of this free country?"*

As for groups living in harmony, one need only recall the ethnic and class frictions that in New York City erupted into a pitched street battle—on Boyne Day, 1871—between Irish Catholics and Protestants; fifty people were killed and more than one hundred wounded. One might also recall the riot that broke out on the Lower East Side in 1902, at the funeral of Rabbi Jacob Joseph, when Irish workers attacked Jewish mourners. Such was the halcyon past so many Americans—native- and foreign-born, middle-class and working class—sought to escape. And such, apparently, is the past to which Sennett bids us return.

FINALLY, Sennett would write off the labors of the planners and the technicians whom he regards as the real villains of the urban crisis. Indeed, his prescription for the urban Arcady is to abolish planning and zoning and to return power to "the people," who, when left alone by the planners and the zoners, will then engage each other in situations of constructive confrontation and thus bring a halt to the threat of massive violence that now haunts us. Here Sennett performs yet another of his disservices to history. Anyone at all familiar with the conditions of the cities before the arrival of the planners and zoners knows that they were crucibles of disease, squalor, and despair. True, planning and zoning have not brought about the urban millennium but they have wrought significant improvements, and where they have failed it has been precisely because of the very intergroup confrontations that Sennett seeks to encourage. Indeed, wherever such confrontations have occurred, Sennett's "people" have always been the losers, falling victim to those who really wield the power.

Sennett proposes to solve the urban crisis by the simple feat of converting from a military-industrial to an urban-industrial base and by the restoration of a condition of affairs that the American people, for good and abundant reason, has devoted much energy to escaping. Is Sennett merely repeating the fashionable cant, or does he really believe that the money saved on military expenditure would be transferred to the cities, that "the people" in whom he reposes such great faith would vote *against* zoning and *for* confrontation, and that non-planning would produce a livable city? As a serious student of society, Sennett should know that the powers-that-be are not likely to spend money on his social priorities. Nor are many Americans, much as they dislike their cities, about to favor his style of urban life. Sennett would have done well to consult Sam Bass Warner, Jr.'s persuasive urban history,† where it is proved beyond cavil that private interest, not public planning, has been the curse of the American city. But Sennett, I fear, has embarked on a "Magical Mystery Tour" of history, in which a romanticized past points the way to a utopian future.

* Quoted in *One of Them*, by E. Hasanovitz, Houghton Mifflin, 1918, p. 310.

† *The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967.

Skin Deep

THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE'S BEAUTY BOOK. By PRINCESS LUCIANA PIGNATELLI, as told to JEANNE MOLLI. *McCall. 122 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by ANNE HOLLANDER

BEAUTY manuals have existed in Western culture for centuries, ever since Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* and probably before. Such texts usually contain highly organized material and are based on the simple premise that female looks need some form of improvement in order to attract the male. Men, on the other hand, have long surveyed female cosmetic devices with

ANNE HOLLANDER, *also a new contributor, specializes in the history of costume, fashion, and design.*

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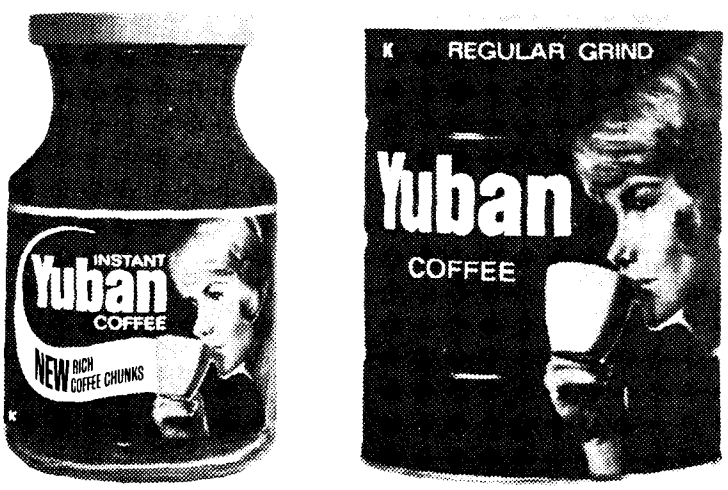

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a curious ambivalence. They may respond superficially with disgust and ridicule to false hair, paint, and padding, and yet at the same time be so touched and moved by their intent that the charm succeeds in spite of its failure. But the enduring power of cosmetics, however it functions, is reflected in the enormous industry presently devoted to them; and the need for them was generally acknowledged even in puritan Victorian America, when noticeable paint was taboo in respectable society. Cosmetics were very much in use, but solely for the absolutely undetectable improvement of what had to appear entirely the gift of God. Beauty instructions in those days tended to be embedded in books on etiquette, household management, and home dressmaking. Such works briskly cautioned against careless mistakes—"false hair is never to be exposed on the dressing-table"—and always gave solemn due to the importance of good health, a commodity more susceptible to the workings of chance in cruder medical times. The main theme, however, was always the enrichment of insufficient natural gifts: one must be redder, whiter, curlier, and plumper—never paler, thinner, or straighter. The sexual power in a female body of which the skull and skeleton are visible through the skin has only acquired ascendancy in the present century, which in Europe and America at least has seen the total eclipse of modish fat.

One of the most engaging 19th-century handbooks is *The Arts and Secrets of Beauty*, published in 1853 by Lola Montez, the famous mistress of Ludwig of Bavaria, who was an Irish "Spanish dancer" and a conspicuous public beauty. Reprinted in the last year or so (unfortunately with a dreadful introduction), it is a refreshing piece of work if only for its excellent style and delicately ironic tone. Lola, like Princess Pignatelli, is in dead earnest, but she has an independence of spirit that charges her utterances with humor and enduring vitality. She gives several cosmetic formulas, saying: "The recipes I shall give for the various cosmetics, washes, pastes, creams, powders, etc. are such as are in use among the fashionable belles of the various capitals of the Old World. I give them as *curiosities*, desiring that they may pass for what they are worth, and no more." So much for the secrets of the Beautiful People. She adds that one should make one's own cosmetics to avoid being taken in by manufacturers who "make preparations for three-pence halfpenny a quart and sell them for five shillings." Her chief recommendations are cleanliness, exercise, and temperate habits; but she also includes numerous reflections such as: "If a lady is anxious to have her mouth look particularly charming for some particular occasion, she will do well to fill her thoughts with some very delightful subject."

Not a word of this kind of advice is given in Princess Pignatelli's *The Beautiful People's Beauty Book*, which is misleadingly subtitled "How to Achieve the Look and Manner of the World's Most Attractive Women." The Princess's own grim, expertly-painted face pictured on the jacket shows that she has rarely given the matter much thought. She prefers to quote Gore Vidal: "Beauty is exterior; it is not interior. Not only does it not matter if there's nothing inside, it probably helps. Character has a tendency to ruin looks." A Wilde remark, but without Oscar's advantage of truth. The Princess allows that happiness helps, but "not unless you use that happy glow only as a starting-point, and then really work at it"—thereby destroying its effect, one would think.

The Princess, writing a hundred years after Lola, is dealing with a very different fashion in physical looks. Lola did not have to worry about the flesh on her upper thighs, for instance, at least in public, and she knew nothing of facelifting and trichology (the treatment of hair), although I doubt that the Princess could ever match her in the realm of pure charm. The main difference, however, is that this modern Roman is free of the 19th-century tenet that cosmetics must not be noticeable. In

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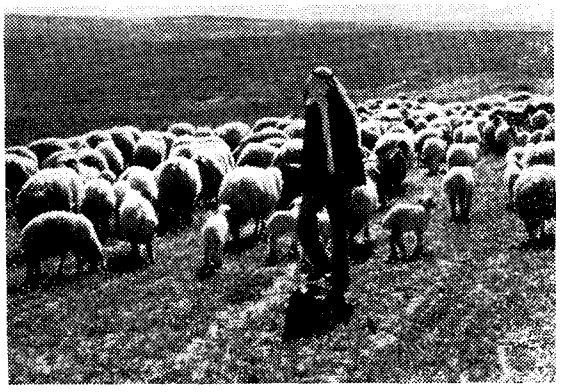

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ancient Rome, similarly, the poet Ovid was not the victim of any enforced separation of cosmetics from respectability nor of sex from honesty. He incorporates his prescriptions for elegance into a love manual, and his theme is artifice in every aspect of life, from the false eyebrow to the false orgasm. He announces at the outset that he is not concerned with virtue, which of course inspires love without any help and is incapable of dissembling. The rest of us, however, must use our ingenuity to make ourselves loved. Nevertheless our hearts are truly warm, our dissembling and our paints and dyes reflect only that search for love which we share with the gods, our humankindness, not our vanity.

Ovid is a man and a poet, and his advice has a magnificent range. No detail escapes his creative eye and receptive heart. Bad fingernails, or a laugh that distorts the mouth, are abrasive to a soul longing to be entranced. Conversely, as we are told by other poets in other periods, a slight dishevelment of the hair or moment of unguarded behavior may suddenly capture a fancy unmoved by total polish. All his generalizations are given authority by his sudden expressions of strong personal taste and feeling, which show he is not contemptuous of his subject nor ever unmoved by its seriousness.

THE author of the present volume moves chiefly in the mid-20th century Roman circle of the Beautiful People, and her observations all concern them. There is a lot of specific description of the individual cosmetic routines of these famous beauties, accompanied by a tremendous amount of prattle about their energetic activity—work, exercise, sport, travel—in the approved modern mode, so that each of these women emerges as a self-maintaining piece of glossy machinery—efficiently constructed, tuned up, simonized, and utterly soulless. Speaking of a certain masseur, she says: "He takes a woman who looks like a dump truck, or a matron who is fast becoming a tank, and turns her into a Ferrari." Why not a golden coach or a sedan-chair? Languor, mystery, and any appearance of leisurely idleness, however graceful, are unacceptable. One must be busy as well as beautiful, and, one need hardly add, very rich.

If one's previous observation had lent these women any human power to charm, this book dissipates it completely. A magazine photograph of Marella Agnelli might have made us gasp and believe her to be freighted with the true beauty's traditional legendary power to enthrall; but in these pages a spirit of racehorse grooming and training prevents any sense of charm or even of humanity from emerging out of these private glimpses. If one wishes to assume that any recipe for effective personal beauty could be provided, whatever one's natural endowments, the instructions or hints given here are curiously lacking in several dimensions. There is no formula for, not even any description of, a set of suitable gestures, movements, or facial ex-

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pressions to provide a living, harmonious vehicle for the perfected physical machine. And there is not one word about the voice, to which Lola Montez devotes a whole chapter. For all their much-praised vitality, these beauties are immobile and silent; or else their sound and motion, as in racehorses or cars, is merely an automatic function of their physical perfection. In fact, as the book finally and unwittingly reveals, they are photographs of themselves.

Toward the end of the book, after sections on face-lifting, exercise, hair care, etc., the point is made in a chapter called "On Being Photogenic." The camera, through which the general public may have its only view of these ladies, is the ultimate judge after all. Sound and movement are irrelevant to the photographic ideal. A quality of gesture, or even of voice, may be suggested by the artistry of the photographer, and no original need exist—only a basic physical image out of which the camera can create beauty. The private audience among which these women move may well be utterly lacking in imaginative susceptibility and capable only of judging the polish of surfaces; or perhaps they really are all great beauties, but possessed of secrets so potent they "dare not be revealed." Or, indeed, perhaps the Princess Pignatelli herself cannot comprehend them. If she knows the secret of characteristic personal charm, she carefully declines to describe what it is like, how it operates, or how it might be imitated.

One may learn more on that subject from two short paragraphs written about these same women by Truman Capote, in a text he wrote once to accompany some Richard Avedon photographs. In that chapter of their collaborative book, *Observations,* the actual pictures of the Beautiful People have less, not more, to say than Capote's comment, which he entitles "A Gathering of Swans." For example: "The cleverest are easily told; and not by any discourse on politics or Proust, any smartly placed banderillas of wit; not, indeed, by the presence of any positive factor, but by the absence of one: self-appreciation. The very nature of her attainment presupposes a certain personal absorption; nonetheless, if one can remark on her face, or in her attitude, an awareness of the impression she makes, it is as though, attending a banquet, one had the misfortune to glimpse the kitchen . . . authentic swans are almost never women nature, and the world, has at all deprived. God gave them good bones; some lesser personage, a father, a husband, blessed them with that best of beauty emollients, a splendid bank account. . . ."

Capote sets forth here two superb observations on beauty both of which are completely absent in Princess Pignatelli's book. Her descriptions of cosmetic surgery neglect to mention, even vaguely, its cost, or that of masseurs, tricholo-gists' consultations, and other things which non-Beautiful People ordinarily would not encounter. The reminder about self-appreciation is particularly needed in a book which expounds the theory throughout that cosmetic care is done entirely for self-satisfaction. A warning about looking too much aware of all you have accomplished would not be amiss, since, as Capote says, your final achievement is your "perishable self." A strong effort of will is necessary in order to stand back from your masterpiece, instead of gloating from behind it, so to speak.

WHAT, then, does the Princess offer in her book, in place of what is not there? She makes familiar and sensible remarks throughout about the importance of regular habits, enough sleep, proper food, and a harmonious life and she carefully explains that no amount of cosmetic effort will insure sexual success or happiness. She states firmly, however, that believing yourself to be beautiful can make you more so, and that makeup helps you believe it. This is true enough, except for those unfortunate miscalculations in the specific application of makeup (or arrangement of hair, or whatever) which blindness to one's own actual looks often permits. Such mistakes, once understood, can only be corrected by trial and error, which experimenting the Princess urges. She does not, however, explain what specific mistakes are common, or how to know that one has been made.

The true subject of this book is, of course, not beauty, but rather certain aspects of fashionable elegance or "chic" which, like real beauty, is unteachable without the passion and the will to be elegant on the part of the student, and that our Princess confesses she has always had. Such a passion, judging from her book, makes one a slave to that ideal of chic which is absolutely current, and does not permit charity for one instant toward previously admired styles, toward present styles which are egregiously un-chic, nor to any wide view of the subject. Such charity or imaginative scope might confuse the will or dilute the passion and thus cause hesitancy or stumbling in the disciplined steps toward modish perfection. Ovid's advice will stand for all time, chiefly because of the marvelous flexibility of masculine appreciation in every epoch; but on the business side of the dressing table, such an appreciative turn of mind cannot be allowed to muddle the self-image and promote adulterations in the absolute purity of a fashionable personal style. Chic seems to demand a systematically narrowed vision and no imagination.

Princess Pignatelli is at her best when she delivers herself of strong opinions: "I adore to ride . . . but I fail to see why certain society ladies in the horsey set should look so weatherbeaten when the horses they ride are so well-groomed." Or of recommendations: "The bosom must never soak in the tub: hot water only drags it down, and no woman wants that." On the latter subject she shows all the modern horror of the force of gravity. Nothing must on any account be allowed to sag; but at the same time, of course, nothing may ever be plump in the obsolete manner. The only recourse is the most stringent program of massage and exercise and, finally, face and body lifts, to eliminate any effects of the natural downward pull which the upright human beast is heir to. Everything must be taut, tight, and firm forever. Help!

There is a section of photographs

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in the middle of the book showing many of the women mentioned. Some are breathtakingly lovely, and one wishes that one had not learned quite so much about the technology of it all, particularly such details as the pulling-back of the corners of the eyes with tape fastened under the hair, or injections of silicone under the skin to fill out the face. The princess is scrupulous about warning against any preparations or apparatus being worn to bed, or even where they may be seen by *anyone,* and she also explains how to manage it. This is one of her excellent pieces of advice, and it lies strangely in the same volume with an utterance like "Hair should be cut when the moon is in the ascendant phase," which comes from a whole chapter entitled "Beauty and the Astrologers." There is a final chapter in which she allows men the same cosmetic scope as women, according to the current trend. In it there is one outright lie, however, attributed to Gianni Agnelli, who says with a fine disregard for history, "A paunch never seduced anyone."

IN GENERAL, the flavor of this book is singularly out of keeping with its subject, to which greater justice ought to have been done. The entire theme of the natural self embellished and enhanced by art, however it is approached, is one of great allure and suggestive depth. Perhaps because they are the ultimately desirable reflectors of feminine beauty, the sensibilities of men who are also poets fit them best to deal with the subject. Baudelaire, in his great essay, "The Painter of Modern Life," elevates the role of cosmetics to a kind of priestly function whereby a woman who noticeably paints her eyes and cheeks is creating out of herself a kind of semi-divine being, higher than nature, fit for adoration. He sees fashionable dress and makeup, which are treated in this book with such a lack of any sense of poetry, as "one of the signs of the primitive nobility of the human soul." For Baudelaire, the cosmetic arts were a form of idealistic striving, like art itself, reflecting the need to transcend nature and satisfy the deepest spiritual longings. Such a creative and visionary response to the details of the toilette was heretical in the 1860's; something like it, however, might give the Beautiful People of this moment a measure of the mysterious, potent glamor which Princess Pignatelli's limited view, however privileged, must fail to lend them.

Morality Play

A PERCENTAGE OF THE TAKE. By WALTER GOODMAN. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 222 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by ROGER STARR

THE Marcus case broke in December 1967, with headlines announcing that James Marcus, Mayor Lindsay's Commissioner of Water Supply, Gas, and Electricity, had resigned under fire. Marcus was soon thereafter indicted for accepting a bribe in connection with the award of a contract to clean out Jerome Reservoir in the Bronx. Few people knew who Marcus was, while probably even fewer were familiar with the names of the other principals which followed his into the papers: Henry Fried, president, *inter alia,* of the contracting company which had taken the reservoir job and given the bribe; Antonio "Tony Ducks" Corallo, allegedly an important underworld figure; Daniel Motto, a shady labor-union official; and Herbert Itkin, a mysterious, complex, and withal unappetizing lawyer who appeared to have masterminded the whole affair, but who later, in the curious ways of justice, was the only one of the four to escape prison.

None of these people mattered much to the public. What mattered was that the administration of John V. Lindsay, so long described by the newspapers as Mr. Clean, the super-WASP, Yale-blue incorruptible, had suddenly brewed a gorgeously inappropriate Italian-Jewish Tammany-type scandal at the exalted commissionership level of local government. The scandal, furthermore, involved a routine bit of business: a kickback on the award of a contract for less than a million dollars at a time when the city government was probably awarding half a billion dollars in contracts each year. How did it happen? How often did it happen? How could it have happened under Lindsay? If it happened to him, how could anyone expect it not to happen to everyone else?

These questions lost their importance for Lindsay before anyone had succeeded in answering them. Their disappearance was helped by the emergence of another scandal involving not only these same principals, but Carmine De Sapio as well. This—an apparent attempt to extort bribes from poor old Consolidated Edison—reminded everyone of what the world used to be like when it was young and Democratic. Shortly afterward, a sanitation strike took the headlines, and the Marcus case was practically forgotten by everyone except its principals and the writer Walter Goodman. Goodman combed the records of the two trials—the Water Supply trial and the De Sapio-Consolidated Edison conspiracy trial—together with anything else he found worth combing. It seems unlikely that anyone will ever be able to say anything so pertinent about the Marcus case as has Goodman. He combines a patient attention to the record with a taste for quotation from the political philosophers, and an ironic interest in the personalities of the several Marcus plotters.

Unfortunately, the materials themselves are limited, to put it mildly, in their reliability. The court records are a jumble of lies, possible lies, near-lies, and self-serving explanations fancied up with irrelevant details. We are never certain that we know who really conceived the plot to exact a bribe from Henry Fried in return for a contract which he probably would have been awarded anyway in the normal course of business. We never know what Marcus did to make Fried willing to pay him. Nor what role the sinister "Tony Ducks" played in inducing Fried to pay the bribe. We cannot be sure who kept what part of the money. Nor of Fried's

ROGER STARR, *a frequent contributor, wrote on "The Aristocrat in Local Politics" in our January number.*

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return for his outlay. Goodman steers us capably in these shoal waters, but only the principals themselves really know them, and they say little that any serious person would believe. Thus, Goodman's report resembles the account of a racing commentator who tells us all about the jockeys and the horses in the walking ring, but whose view of the actual race is blocked by a hill in the infield.

THE background detail is fascinating: we marvel at the convoluted intaglio that reveals/conceals Itkin's several identities; the hollow precision of Henry Fried's testimony; the shapeless terror that clings to the figure of "Tony Ducks" Corallo; Marcus's tremors, produced by the puff of social ambition on a psyche as light as a dried leaf. Yet our fascination never becomes real interest. The people involved never capture our concern. Their downfalls never become tragedy; their criminality never seems menacing to us.

Although the book jacket tells us that we are to hear about a classic case of municipal corruption, the Marcus matter is anything but that. Classically, graft consists of a payment made by a private party to a government official to induce the official to condone misbehavior; to give a contract to the unqualified; to accept shoddy goods or unneeded services; to permit excessive profits on negotiated contracts. None of these occurred on the reservoir job. Fried's firm was, Goodman tells us, the best qualified in the city to do the job. So far as we are told the job was done well, nor was the compensation, so far as we know, excessive. What then made Fried agree to pay the bribe? Perhaps we should assume that in the Department it was customary to pay an illicit "finder's fee" on negotiated "emergency" contracts in order to buy "reasonable" supervision. It's a nice theory, but if this was a routine matter, what made Itkin and Marcus bring in Motto and Corallo to act as go-betweens and share the gravy? Were they in fact the crucial figures in the plot, convincing Fried to make his payment by threat? Then we would not have a case of bribery, but of extortion; did the world ever produce a less probable extortion victim than Henry Fried, a multimillionaire contractor with vast political connections? Or perhaps he simply agreed to pay the bribe as an investment in future activity, a good-will gesture. The answer remains a puzzlement.

The related Consolidated Edison case has a clearer meaning. Goodman tells us that after Marcus and Itkin concluded the reservoir matter, only to find that their partners Motto and Corallo had kept most of the take, Itkin met De Sapio and the two cooked up a better plan. They would all get rich on Consolidated Edison. Marcus was to withhold quite legitimate permit approvals needed by the power company until its desperate officials would throw contracts to Fried, out of the proceeds of which he would pay Marcus and Itkin. Since Consolidated Edison never fell for the scheme—its highest officials blowing the whistle as soon as they got wind of it—the matter remained simply a charge of conspiracy on which De Sapio was ultimately convicted. (Incidentally, if any of the people in the Chicago Seven case who complained about the principle of prosecution for "conspiracy" rallied to support Carmine De Sapio under these similar circumstances, their consistency has not come to my attention.) Marcus tried to hold up Consolidated Edison in connection with the approval of a new higher-voltage transmission line on the existing right-of-way which the company had acquired over the city's aqueduct in Westchester County. Here arose a neat problem which Goodman asks us to think about.

Since the Consolidated Edison proposal for this new high-tension line was entirely reasonable and necessary, and since the Mayor himself had urged Marcus to help the utility company, this singular Commissioner was hard put to find a reason for delaying his consent. Finally, he hit on the notion of referring the matter to the Bureau of Franchises. That municipal body, with the best will in the world, decided that the annual payment for a new franchise would have to be many times greater than the old annual payment. Consolidated Edison rejected the Bureau's demand, and the resulting argument was still raging unsettled when Goodman wrote his book two years later. The power line has not yet been built, thanks to this "legitimate" argument. Everyone knows what has happened to costs —and to the New York City power supply in the meantime.

Goodman points out that if Marcus had quietly been given his bribe three years ago, the matter would never have arisen in the Bureau of Franchises. Taking Goodman's instructions to weigh the ironies involved, I am delighted for the opportunity to vent my belief that graft provides a means of reaching a decision and precipitating action in the midst of a morass of regulation and law which, if taken literally, would stop governments as totally as following the rule book stops railroads. There are, of course, other bases on which to make decisions in the face of conflicting and endless regulations, but many of them (denial of due process, for example) are as unpopular as graft in the courts.

So long as legislators win applause by passing new laws to regulate and control human behavior, the need to ignore their work *in certain circumstances* will grow. Graft provides a basis for selecting the circumstances. It offers a payment to a government official for accepting the risk of breaking the law.

I AM aware of the extent to which graft distorts and ultimately, I suppose, destroys the unwritten compact of representative government, but in the apportionment of blame for its existence let us not forget the ambitious lawmakers who never consider the difficulties that follow the enforcement of their work; or the editorialists who cherish high purpose but never calculate its cost. In bringing these matters to our attention, and causing us to think of them after we have finished reading, Walter Goodman has fashioned a succinct and entertaining morality play. Its ethical values are rooted in Aristotle's view of popular government; Damon Runyon wrote the dialogue.

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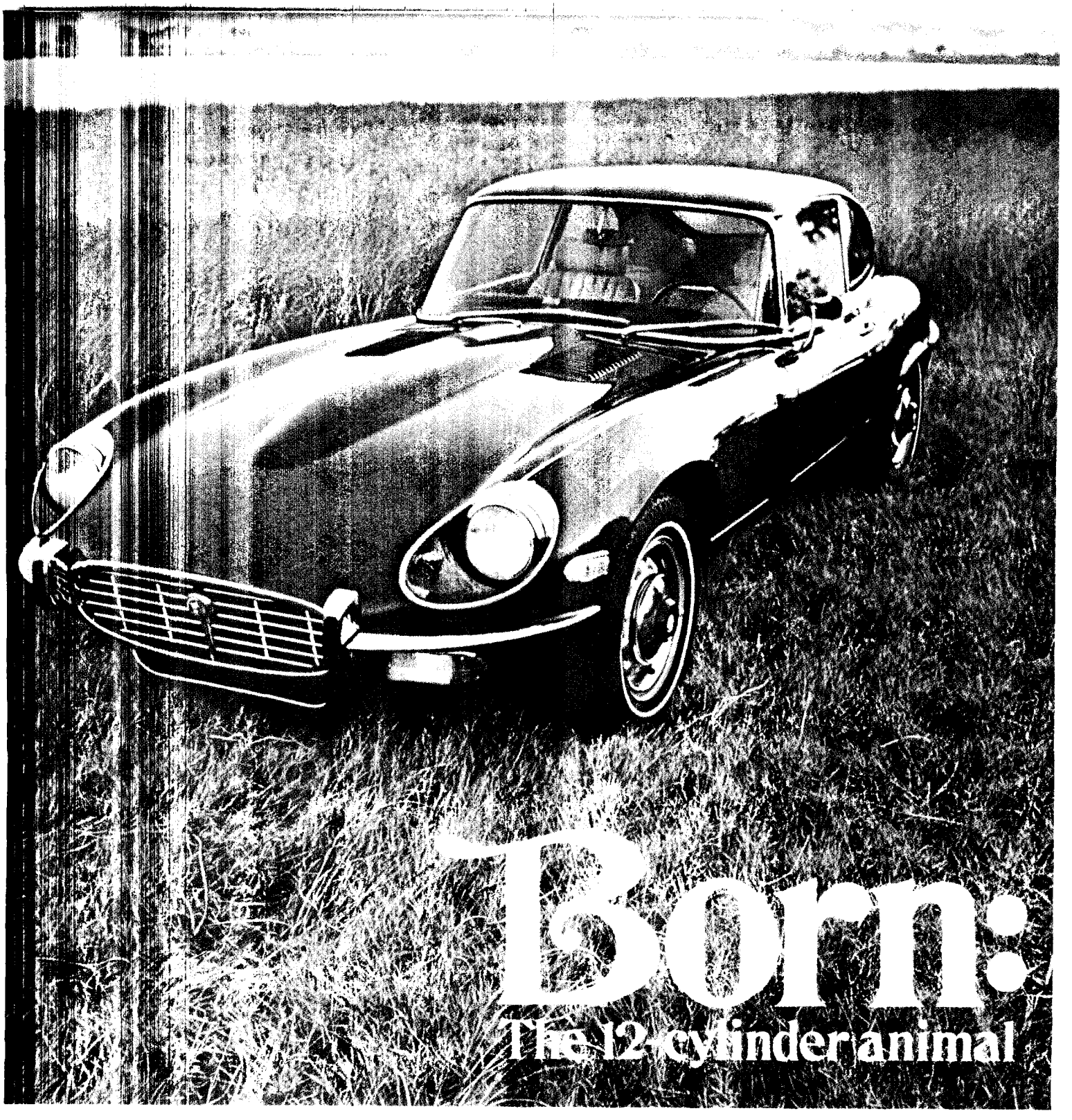

Jaguar, a breed of cat rarely considered timid, announces the most exciting automotive development in years—an aluminum V-12 engine.

The logic of the V-12 configuration: The V-12 is inherently balanced. Its smoothness is almost uncanny.

Significance: This 12-cylinder engine idles in near-silence. Its virtual absence of vibration may take some getting used to.

Some specifics: Jaguar's V-12 displaces only 326 cubic inches and yet develops 314 horsepower. The cylinders have a very large bore and the pistons have a short stroke, to attain higher potential power and longer engine life. And the power is delivered through an exceptionally wide range of engine revolutions.

An eye-opener: The ignition system is transistorized. It employs a new electronic distributor that eliminates all contact points. With no contact points to wear or foul, a major cause of engine tune-ups is eliminated. (Incidentally, an out of tune engine is a major cause of air pollution.)

Finally: Jaguar has a fully-independent suspension system with "anti-dive" front-end geometry. New disc brakes, power-assisted on all 4 wheels. And rack-and-pinion steering, also power assisted, with 3.5 turns lock-to-lock and a turning circle of 36 feet.

Incredibly, the Jaguar 2+2, with this revolutionary V-12 engine, costs only $7,325.*

See the 12-cylinder animal at your nearby Jaguar dealer. Study the engine. Because it's the one you'll be hearing about for many years to come.

For the name of your nearest Jaguar dealer, dial (800) 631-1971 except in New Jersey where the number is (800) 962-2803. Calls are toll-free.

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Jaguar V-12

*Manufacturer's suggested retail price, P.O.E. Destination charges, dealer preparation charges, state and local taxes (if any) not included. Whitewalls optional extra.

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Cutty Sark. The only one of its kind.

In the clipper era, magnificent tall ships sailed herculean races from China and Australia. The stakes: Fortunes and reputations. Only the fastest clippers challenged *Cutty Sark*. Here are three. None have survived. Only *Cutty* remains in permanent berth in England. Today, as a century ago, *Cutty Sark* is unique.

Thermopylae, fastest of the tea clippers for years. But in 1872, after the most famous and controversial clipper race of all time, *Cutty Sark* was declared winner of "the blue ribband of the Pacific."

Ariel, one of the sleekest, most beautiful clippers ever built. In 1872, she left Shanghai a day before *Cutty Sark*. *Cutty* beat her home by a week.

Derwent, constant rival of *Cutty Sark's* in the days of the Australia trade. In 1888, *Derwent* departed Sydney over two weeks ahead of *Cutty Sark*. *Cutty* was home first by three days.

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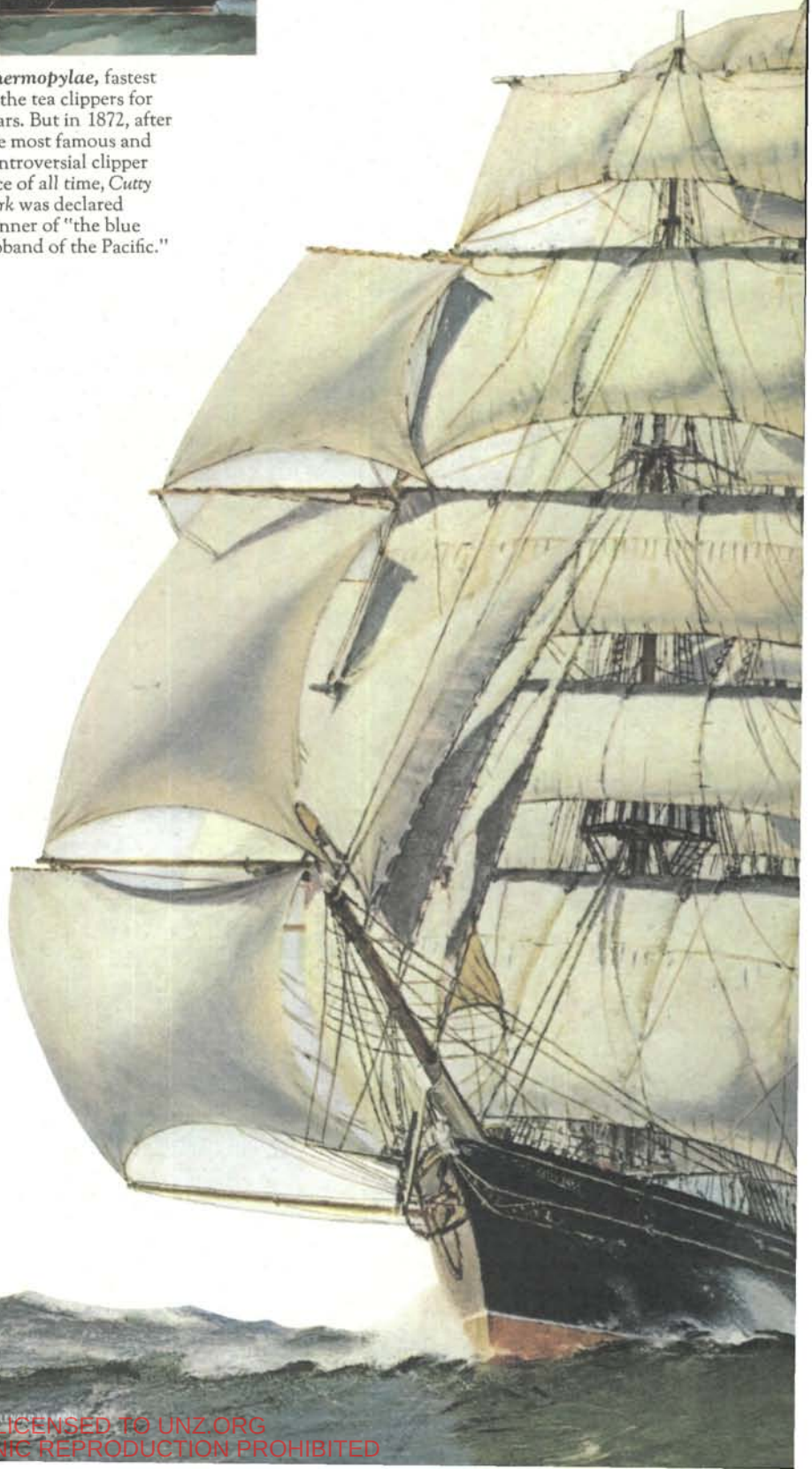
For exact replica of antique 3-pint "Liverpool" *Cutty Sark* pitcher, above, send check or money order for $4.95 to: Cutty Sark Pitcher, P.O. Box 56, New York, N.Y. 10046. Offer void where prohibited.



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